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# INFANT BAPTISM

A SCRIPTURAL SERVICE,

AND

DIPPING UNNECESSARY TO ITS RIGHT ADMINISTRATION;

CONTAINING

A CRITICAL SURVEY AND DIGEST OF THE LEADING EVIDENCE,  
CLASSICAL, BIBLICAL, AND PATRISTIC :

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF DR. CARSON, AND OCCASIONAL STRICTURES  
ON THE VIEWS OF DR. HALLEY.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE leading object contemplated in this treatise is the defence of infant baptism as a divine institution, and of scriptural latitude in the mode of its administration. Convinced by careful and protracted inquiry that immersion is neither identical with baptism, nor essential to it, and that "the little ones" cannot be rightfully debarred from the ordinance, I have endeavoured to present a critical analysis and digest of the evidence on which these convictions are founded. In prosecuting the inquiry, the principal testimonies from the ancient classics, the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and the writings of the fathers, have been examined at considerable length, and the results in some interesting cases tested and sustained by comparison with artistic monuments of antiquity. The chronological order has been to a certain extent followed in tracing the significations of the more important terms; the structure of

the passages in which these terms occur, has not been overlooked as a modifying element; and the principle has been broadly asserted that the ascertained usage of any particular period is not the slave of antecedent usage. Baptism, for instance, in the writings of the apostles may not exactly correspond to baptism in the works of Hippocrates or Plato; and in that case each must stand upon its own evidence, the earlier usage having no power to overlay or coerce the later. This principle does not limit the province, though it aids in wisely applying the products, of "historical philology," which renders valuable service in determining the mode of the ordinance, and the discipleship predicated of its subjects.

Without deviating essentially from the proposed plan of discussion, I have considered it my duty, in the present state of the baptismal controversy, to make special reference to the opposing view as advocated with characteristic power and acumen in Dr. Carson's work on Baptism. As a specimen of masterly criticism and forcible argument, that work possesses merit of a very high order; yet the scholarship of the writer, as it appears to me, is not unfrequently at fault, and fallacy lurks in several of those logical processes which seem closest and most convincing. This charge is not pre-



ferred at random, nor would it ever have been penned in the absence of such proof as will satisfy every candid inquirer, and sustain the assault of adverse polemics. It is contrary alike to my intention and my feelings, if these pages contain a single expression inconsistent with sincere respect for Dr. Carson's talents and acquirements as an author, and his eminent worth as a Christian man;—still in instances not a few, his positions are challenged, his reasonings refuted, his assertions contradicted, and his abuse and dogmatism rebuked. For this course I have no apology to offer. It would indeed be a most unsuitable tribute to the memory of an author who zealously maintained the privilege of unshackled freedom of discussion, to shield his own views from the fire of criticism, and thus necessarily invest truth and error with a common sacredness.

On the mode of Baptism, I am disposed to rank the labours of Dr. Halley among the most important contributions to the cause which I have espoused. In none of the treatises which have recently issued from the press, have I detected the same comprehensiveness and mental grasp in dealing with the subject as a whole, combined with equal correctness in the examination and adjustment of matters of detail. Of the fruits of his well-directed talent, I have freely, and with marked

acknowledgments, availed myself in several parts of the discussion, without, however, in any instance sacrificing the responsibility, or shrinking from the toil, of independent investigation. More space than consisted with Dr. Halley's object, has been here devoted to several branches of the evidence on which Immersionists place considerable reliance; and their leading objections are combated,—with what success it remains for an enlightened Christian public to decide.

On the *subjects* of baptism, some of the views advocated by Dr. Halley find little favour in the present volume. Reasons have been assigned for setting aside his conclusions respecting the character and value of the argument derived from the Abrahamic covenant; and the restricted view of infant and adult baptism has been supported in opposition to the more liberal principle on which he dispenses the ordinance. Dr. Wardlaw, in his excellent *Dissertation on Infant Baptism*, approaches much nearer to the teaching which I hold to be at once patriarchal and apostolic. At the same time, candour must admit that the constitution and membership of the church, according to Dr. Halley's theory of which he has promised a farther expansion and defence, remain unaffected by the laxity with which he administers baptism to all infants indiscriminately, and to all adults



who apply for the privilege without manifest scoffing and profanity. I take leave simply to add that my honest disapproval of some of the author's most cherished opinions, has not, in the slightest degree, diminished the high estimation in which I hold him as a learned and able theologian, and an upright manly controversialist.

Few in the present day, it may be presumed, deprecate all religious discussion, however they may regret the necessity for it. As a general rule it may be confidently stated, that as is the spirit in which controversy is conducted, so are its tendencies for good or for evil. To the interests of the sceptic and the dogmatist, free, earnest discussion is equally hostile; while, under the divine blessing, it goes to dispel obscurity, elicit truth, and ascertain what are "those things which cannot be shaken." I patronize religious controversy, not because it may occasion a little present disturbance; but as an agency calculated to produce eventually the harmony which is based on sound comprehensive knowledge. Productive of temporary and adventitious evil, it yet secures permanent good: its course may be attended with transient strife and bitterness, but Christian unity will triumph in its consummation. While, therefore, I appear on the arena of religious controversy, my heart

owns no feeling of hostility to the friends of evangelical truth of whatever denomination, among all of whom I rejoice to witness a desire for more friendly co-operation, prompted doubtless by the Spirit of Him who offered the intercessory prayer "that they all may be one."

BELFAST COLLEGE, *June*, 1848.



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## PART FIRST.

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# MODE OF BAPTISM.

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### CHAPTER FIRST.

#### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

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THE ordinance of Baptism, as the initiatory rite of the New Covenant, demands from the student of Scripture a full and searching investigation. Instituted by our blessed Lord, and designed to continue in the church till his second coming, this solemn and interesting observance puts forward high claims on the understanding and conscience of every Christian, and more especially of him who “ministers in sacred things.” Through ignorance of its character, or misapprehension of the engagements which it imposes, the ordinary member of the church will fail in the department of personal duty—the gospel minister in the discharge of public obligation.



We cannot, indeed, entertain the apprehension that the church will become insensible to the vital importance of baptism, or forget the high authority by which its observance is expressly enjoined. The inspired record of its institution, by the evangelists—Matthew and Mark—has long afforded considerable employment to different classes of critics and Theologians. In many respects, this is as it should be. A dark day will dawn on the followers of the Lord Jesus, when the apostolic commission fails to awaken the deepest interest, and to summon forth the most powerful energies of those who are “set for the defence of the gospel.” It behoves the heralds of the cross to comprehend, in its full import, the momentous, the divine utterance, which bids them “go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Upon these instructive words the resources of theology have been largely, and sometimes not unsuccessfully, concentrated. To investigate, scripturally, the signification of the ordinance—to mark the great facts and doctrines which it obviously symbolises or implies—to press home, by enlightened enforcement, the motives it furnishes to practical godliness—these are objects to which minds of the first order, both in ancient and modern times, have piously consecrated their energies, with the rich stores of knowledge which they had laboriously accumulated. These views occupy a place of merited prominence in the writings of the leading reformers. We do not refer to the works composed by Luther, and some of his distinguished compeers, in refutation of the errors of the Anabaptists, or, as Zwingle styled them, the

♦

Katabaptists. Our remark points emphatically to those calm, didactic exhibitions of divine truth by which these men of God enlightened the darkness, and animated the deadness, of European mind. The *Institutes* of Calvin may be mentioned as a felicitous example of that theological disquisition, which, penetrating the shell of rite and ceremony, brought to view the substantive blessings of the baptismal institution, as symbolical of “the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ.” By a succession of able men, this spiritual element has been from time to time fully developed, and faithfully pressed on the attention of evangelical Christendom ; while none, perhaps, have better succeeded in presenting it, on the sure foundation of Scripture verity, than our excellent Westminster divines. Whatever importance, then, may legitimately attach to the outward ceremonial, we hold it to be comparatively as the shell to the kernel, or the casket to the gem, which they respectively contain.

We do not, by these remarks, court the imputation of complimenting theology, properly so called, at the expense of sacred Hermeneutics. The function of the interpreter of Scripture is not distinguished from that of the theologian, by an exclusive devotedness to modes, and forms, and rites, and the entire tribe of externalities. It may indeed appear frequently in the costume, and occupy the position of an outer-court worshipper ; yet, there exists no barrier in the way of its free entrance into the *Holy of Holies*. When engaged in canvassing the institution of baptism, its province is by no means confined to the common questions respecting the authorized use of water, and the scriptural subjects to whom

that element is to be applied. The very terms of the apostolic commission demand, for the exercise of its powers, a loftier range of investigation, and raise topics of infinitely more profound interest, in the discussion of which it is entitled to a patient hearing. A simple reference to the phrase—"Baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—must instantly satisfy every candid mind that the ordinance implies, on the part of its subjects, an intimate relation to the author of the new economy, and, consequently, that the sound exposition of it cannot fail of conducting us into the region of spirituality.

The principle thus briefly indicated appears to be loudly called for, in the present crisis of the controversy respecting baptism. So far has inconsiderate attachment to a particular view carried some of the disputants on one side of the question, that the *mode* of administration has been avowedly identified with the ordinance itself; and the alteration of the form is affirmed to involve the destruction of the substance. Thus the *Primitive Church Magazine*, the representative of the Strict Communion Baptists in England, in a review\* of Dr. Halley on *The Sacraments*, risks the adventurous proposition, "That in baptism the mode is the ordinance, and if the mode is altered, the ordinance is abolished." This carnal and degrading view of the initiatory rite of Christianity, we hold to be utterly incompatible with the plain language of the apostolic commission. Had that commission merely enjoined baptism with water, and were such baptism ascertained

\* Number for October, 1844, p. 515.



to be stringently synonymous with dipping, then indeed it might be triumphantly contended that “the mode is the ordinance.” But so long as the record commands to “baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” the conscientious and enlightened interpreter of the Bible will be compelled to admit that baptism is something more than mode. Even conceding, for the sake of argument, that the mode is fixed and unalterable, we should still maintain that the use of the divine name, in a form so beautifully solemn and impressive, does not constitute an ornamental appendage to the ordinance, but enters into its nature and essence. The mode may be of very material interest—it might be even essential to the scriptural administration of baptism ; still, it can never be rightfully identified with the baptismal sacrament, until the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be blotted out of the commission. We do not wonder that a correspondent of the respectable periodical to which we have referred, “would feel obliged by an answer to the question, ‘Is it consistent, with our Lord’s institution of the Supper, to observe it at any other time than in the evening?’” This is to introduce into the generous religion of Christ that narrow and atomic spirit, of which Seneca complained in the department of philosophy—“*Sed non debuit hoc nobis esse propositum, \* \* \* philosophiam in *has angustias ex sua majestate* detrahere.*” Might it not be respectfully suggested, to the conductors and their correspondent, that a disproportionate zeal for external circumstances has an unhappy tendency to impair the exercise of spiritual discernment, and, in the case under

consideration, to reduce both ordinances to the level of those "beggary elements," which we have the highest authority for pronouncing alien to the genius of Christianity?

In entering upon our present inquiry, it affords us pleasure to notice that the controversy between the Pædobaptist and Anti-Pædobaptist does not cover the entire ground of the ordinance. The advocate of affusion, or sprinkling, for example, does not generally impugn, as wrong or unscriptural, the mode of administration adopted by the Immersionist. His position is, that the terms of the institution are of such latitude as to permit diversity of mode, without trenching upon the character and substance of the ordinance, or rendering its import of none effect. We consider baptism to be equally valid, so far as mere mode is concerned, whether the subject is plunged into its waters, or these are applied to him by sprinkling or affusion. The language of the *Confession of Faith* on this point is well weighed, and distinguished alike for caution and discrimination. "Dipping of the person into water," say the Westminster divines, "is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." On this branch of the argument, therefore, we stand entirely on the defensive, not assailing the mode defended by the Anti-Pædobaptist, but simply vindicating the scriptural validity of our own. *He* is bound by his principles to cut up our mode by the roots—and religiously does he labour to discharge the obligation; while *we* have no quarrel with his mode, except in relation to what we conceive to be its unwar-

rantable intolerance and exclusiveness. The right or the wrong of these several points of agreement and antagonism must, of course, be decided mainly by appeal to the ascertained usage of the Greek language.

Again, in regard to the subjects of baptism, it is admitted, by the vast majority on both sides of the controversy, that the ordinance may be administered to an adult, and that the administration must be preceded by at least his credible profession of faith in Christ, and obedience to him. The principle of adult baptism, as we may have occasion to notice more in detail, has been uniformly held by the Christian church from the earliest times ; most generally, however, has it appeared not as the rival, but the companion of infant baptism. The statement holds good at the present hour. Our Pædobaptist missionaries in heathen lands, and among the Jews, invariably commence with the baptism of adults; and, in this respect, the ordinary narratives of the dawn of missionary enterprise, in all parts of the globe, present a pleasing and instructive similarity to the records of the apostolic age. In common, then, with our Anti-Pædobaptist brethren, we believe that adults should be baptized with the “one baptism ;” and we farther concur with them generally, in maintaining that the adult applicant must possess certain religious qualifications. But with reference to another class of the proposed subjects of this ordinance, the *Anti-Pædobaptist* denies, and *we* affirm, that “The infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.” We charge his system with unauthorized restriction in the administration of baptism, contrary to the liberal and comprehen-

sive spirit of the new covenant, and unsupported by the provisions of the apostolic commission. He condemns ours as wantonly opening the door of the commission, to admit subjects whose exclusion was obviously intended by our blessed Saviour.

The entire ground of debate, so far as it commonly engages public discussion, may be placed before the reader in the simple, suggestive questions, Is baptism divinely tied to one mode? and are believers alone, or such as make a credible profession of faith, its scriptural subjects? In the extensive course of investigation, requisite to furnish a satisfactory answer to these questions, we shall have occasion to consider, in its bearing on both branches of the controversy, the important expression, "Into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."



## CHAPTER SECOND.

### MODE ESTIMATED, AND EVIDENCE ARRANGED.

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SYMBOLIC ORDINANCES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—ARRANGEMENT OF THE  
EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BY THE TERMS ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ AND БАПТИ́ЗМ.

IN common with the great mass of evangelical Christians, we hold, as has been already intimated, that while baptism may be rightly administered by immersion, there exists no adequate ground for the lofty and exclusive pretensions with which that mode has been confidently invested. We are free to admit, that were immersion ascertained to be absolutely essential to the ordinance, or, had the Saviour's injunction specified that particular mode as obligatory upon his followers, then unhesitating submission would have been the duty and the privilege of the Christian. But the language of Scripture, as we are convinced, correctly expounded, allows us greater latitude in the administration of baptism; and hence we will not permit the sphere of our Christian liberty to be circumscribed, or bring ourselves into bondage, by subjection to a modal observance which divine authority has not imposed.

The comparative value of mode in baptism has been sometimes illustrated by referring to a parallel principle, practically elicited in partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. That solemn ordinance was instituted by our blessed Lord on the *night* in which he was betrayed. The very season, therefore, which he selected for this purpose, formed a strong link of association between the sacramental partaking of bread and wine, and that repast which immediately precedes the rest of the night. But the case supplies us with evidence more cogent than that which arises out of the mere exercise of a principle of association, however natural and irresistible. As if to confirm and perpetuate the bond between the ordinance, and a certain period of the day set apart for its observance, the Spirit of God has expressly designated it "the Lord's *Supper*." The term in the original is δᾱπνον, the history of which discovers some striking varieties of application, particularly among the earlier classical writers. According to Dr. Halley, in his able work on *The Sacraments*, forming the Congregational Lecture for 1844, "The heroes of Homer partook of their δᾱπνον in the morning, and their successors seem to have made it their dinner; but long before the apostolic age, it had become regularly and constantly the evening meal." The former part of this statement appears to be chargeable with some degree of inaccuracy. In the age of Homer, as is noticed by Damm, Buttman, and other lexicographers, there are two daily repasts—one in the morning, and the other in the evening; and the term δᾱπνον is found to be generally, though not exclusively, appropriated to the former. The

philosophy of its subsequent transitions may probably be explained in a satisfactory manner, if, as Nitzsch maintains in his learned commentary on the *Odyssey*, it primarily denoted the principal meal, without reference to time. But on whatever principle we may dispose of the philological explanation, it is an undoubted fact, that in the later period of Greek literature, *δᾶπνον* precisely corresponded with the Latin *coena*, and our English *Supper*; and its application, in this sense, to the communion of Christ's body and blood, cannot be successfully challenged.

The student of Scripture, who drinks at the fountain of the originals, will thus perceive that a triumphant case could be easily made out for restriction to a specified time in the observance of this solemn institution. By a process analogous to that which is commonly adopted in investigating the sense of *βαπτίσμα*, it were not difficult to prove, by a mass of evidence, superior to all exception, drawn from Hellenistic Greek, that in the apostolic age *δᾶπνον* was the appropriated designation of the evening meal. The New Testament alone, according to Bruder's accurate Concordance, supplies eighteen examples, all obviously limited to the one application. Now, proceeding upon this, as an established fact in the history and *usage* of the Greek language, might we not, after the manner of our opponents, earnestly warn the professed disciples of Jesus against disobedience to the command of their divine Master, when we find them in the morning, or at mid-day, sacramentally partaking of bread and wine, and calling this observance the Lord's *Supper*? Are they at liberty, we might ask with

unfeigned astonishment, to trample upon the time selected by their Saviour, in the institution of the ordinance, and ingrained in the name given to it by the spirit of inspiration? To reasoning and appeals of this stamp, it would be deemed sufficient by the great body of Christians, including a majority of the Baptist denomination, to reply that time forms no essential part of the ordinance; and that, therefore, at whatever period of the day the humble and exercised Christian sits down at the table of the Lord, he realises a substantial and scriptural participation of the Lord's Supper. This view of duty we are not disposed to controvert; and we are gratified to understand that it commands the suffrages of the most enlightened of our Immersionist brethren. Now, even on the assumption that *mode* is invariably and essentially implied in βαπτίσμα, the sin of the advocate for sprinkling or affusion, consists simply in regarding mode, as one of the circumstantials of the ordinance. And while he cherishes a godly jealousy against all unholy, or prohibited liberty with the word of God, he feels it both hard and inconsistent to be rebuked by a Baptist brother, who, with all his boasted attachment to literal exposition, has had the temerity to expunge the element of time from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. We reiterate our conviction that the evangelical Baptist commits no breach of the divine law, in partaking of the Sacramental Supper in the morning; but if he denounces, at the same time, our baptism as no ordinance of Christ, because it wears not the outward garb which his sect may consider essential, we shall take the liberty of *holding the mirror up to nature*, for the exposure of this



specimen of flagrant inconsistency. Does he attempt to defend the peculiarity of his procedure, by asserting that mode is inseparable from the term βαπτίσμα, and therefore belongs essentially to the ordinance? We reply time is just as necessarily included in δᾶπνον: and when he produces his warrant for the ejection of *time* from the observance of the *Supper*, we shall be prepared to establish our right to dispense with his favourite mode, in the administration of baptism.

In this line of argument, we have proceeded upon the assumption that dipping is *the* synonyme of baptism; we see no reason, however, for conceding that great point in the discussion. It may perhaps be considered preposterous, or unprofitable to go over ground which has been so often traversed by the most competent Biblical scholars and philologists of various religious denominations. In particular, it may be supposed to betray the confidence of an enterprising spirit to challenge some of the leading positions of the late lamented Dr. Carson, whose ability and critical acumen eminently qualified him for profound philological investigation, while a higher tribute of respect is due to his character, as a Christian man of exemplary candour, and unfaltering honesty of purpose. It were, however, a mistaken compliment to the memory of one who loved and courted great freedom of discussion to spare his views, when we may consider them erroneous, or shrink from the manly task of exposing his statements and reasonings, where they are ascertained to be illogical or inconclusive. The memory of the good we delight to hold in high and venerable estimation; but apart from all names, however honoured,

we are bound to reserve for the heavenly form of truth, the deep and unlimited homage of our hearts.

Among the earlier writers on both sides of the question, it was customary to mix up the verbs βάπτω and βαπτίζω, in critical disquisitions on the mode of baptism. This procedure evinced not only want of discrimination, but utter ignorance of the true functions which these terms respectively are employed to discharge. The confusion which thus lay at the foundation of many a learned treatise, forced the author into a variety of philological and controversial details, which could serve no other purpose than to display the unphilosophical cast of the mind from which they emanated. Thus, the advocates of baptism, by sprinkling, or affusion, derived a popular argument in support of their practice from the secondary sense of βάπτω, which is to *dye* or *tinge*; and their opponents, in order to neutralise the force of the argument, had the hardihood to deny the existence of this secondary sense altogether, in defiance of the plainest facts of usage, and the soundest canons of criticism. In reference to the reasoning of the Pædobaptists, though the term has unquestionably the secondary acceptation for which they contended, yet their cause could reap no direct benefit from that circumstance; for in the whole circle of Hellenistic Greek, the ordinance is never once designated by \*βάπτω, or any of its immediate derivatives. Whatever,

\* In the edition of Stephanus, by Hase and Dindorf, βεβαμμένος is said to be used for βεβαπτισμένος, in the following example from Arrian. Epictet. ii. 9, 21:—“Οταν δ' ἀναλάβῃ τὸ πάθος τοῦ βεβαμμένου

\* \* τότε καὶ ἔστι τῷ ὄντι καὶ καλεῖται Ἰουδαῖος. Some sort of baptism is here indicated.

then, may be the strength or clearness of the evidence establishing the claim of this verb to a variety of senses, we are not entitled to infer a corresponding variety in the use of βαπτίζω, which must prove its own meaning, not by hereditary descent, so to speak, but by personal testimony. We admit, indeed, that the philologist having encountered actual diversity in the one verb, may anticipate probable diversity in the other: but the anticipation possesses no practical value, unless upon examination it is borne out by facts. The Paedobaptist, therefore, had no legitimate warrant to argue from an ascertained secondary sense of βάπτω to a supposed or assumed similar sense of βαπτίζω; though, in so doing, he merely exemplified the unhappy confusion which long remained common property on both sides of the controversy.

It is, indeed, painfully instructive to observe the efforts of the Immersionists of a former age, to prove that every occurrence of βάπτω, in the sense of *dyeing*, necessarily involves the modal signification of *dipping*. You direct the attention of Dr. Gale to the case of the aged dandy, who had recourse to colouring matter in order to disguise the hoariness of his locks; you place under his eye the statement of Arrian, on the authority of Nearchus, “that the Indians *dye* their beards;”—you even present him with the decisive passage from Hippocrates, in which the author states, that when a certain liquid “*drops upon* the garments they are *dyled*;” and you inform him that these constitute a sample of the testimonies found in the language to the secondary sense of βάπτω, and its immediate derivatives. Having briefly

submitted the matter to the consideration of the “very learned doctor,”—the former leader of the English Baptist world, you respectfully ask for his decision. This he pronounces as follows:—“Those persons who would depend upon these passages to prove that βάπτω signifies something else besides dipping, must consider there is a manifest allusion in these and all such to the art of dyeing. And if the word is borrowed from thence, as none can be hardy enough to deny, they must allow it is used there improperly and metaphorically, and that its true primitive meaning only is still referred to and implied.” *Wall’s Hist. of Inf. Bap. Vol. III., p. 109.* The philosophy of Dr. Gale on this subject is unceremoniously and very properly impugned by Dr. Carson; and it is gratifying to learn from Dr. Halley’s treatise, that the Baptists of Britain, despite of the faith and philology of their ancestors, now generally adopt, at the instance of Dr. Carson, the secondary sense for which their Paedobaptist brethren have all along contended. “As generally I am told,” observes Halley, “as they did follow Dr. Gale in denying a secondary meaning, do they now follow Dr. Carson in asserting it. To what extent this may be true, I cannot say; but as no opponent appears, and as we have no reason to suspect the sincerity of our brethren’s convictions, the result furnishes a remarkable instance of the difference in the force or the impression of arguments, as they are suggested by a friend, and as they are propounded by a foe: That βάπτω often means to dye, without dipping, was said by one Paedobaptist after another, no Baptist regarding; but when Dr. Carson said the same thing,



multitudes were converted.”—*Halley on the Sacraments*, Vol. I., p. 440.

In the present day, writers at all acquainted with the literature of the subject, and professing to enter critically into the analysis of the evidence, take the verbs βάπτω and βαπτίζω into separate consideration, and thus avoid much of the confusion and irrelevancies chargeable on the reasonings of their predecessors. Following this course, we shall proceed to adduce proofs of the primary and secondary sense of βάπτω, defending the views which we consider well founded, and offering such strictures as the positions of some authors of merit may appear to us to demand.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

### PRIMARY SENSE OF ΒΑΪΤΩ.

DETAILED EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF "DIP" AS THE PRIMARY SENSE OF ΒΑΪΤΩ  
—THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHING TO DIVERSITY OF CONSTRUCTION—MEAN-  
ING OF THE EXPRESSION "WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN," DAN. IV. 30,  
V. 21—OBJECTIONS TO THE BAPTIST VIEW, AS EXPOUNDED BY GALE AND  
CARSON—TENDENCY OF THE VERB TO SHAKE OFF THE TRAMMELS OF MODE.

THAT *dip* represents the primitive and leading sense of βάπτω is freely, and, we presume, universally conceded. This position is not more zealously maintained by Gale, Booth, Maclean, Carson, and others, than it is cordially admitted by such writers as Vossius, Matthies, Professor Stuart, and President Beecher. A few examples, embracing the principal constructions in which the term occurs, will at once place this meaning on a solid foundation, and probably bring to light some tendency to departure from the modal signification. The instances we may thus classify:—

1. The action of βάπτω is conceived to be expressed most unequivocally and emphatically in construction with the preposition εἰς: as in the *Timæus* of Plato 73. E. ed. Steph. Εἰς ὕδωρ βάπτει, "He *dips* (an object)

into water." The verb is not confined to fluids, but applies equally to solid substances which are penetrable. Thus Lycophron, surnamed *Tenebrosus*, in his *Cassandra*, v. 1121, predicting the punishment of Clytemnestra, by Orestes, for murder, says: Εἰς σπλάγχχ' ἐχίδνης ἀντόχειρ βάψει ξίφος, The child \* \* \* "with his own hand shall *dip* (plunge) *his sword into the viper's bowels*." The same construction occurs in the Septuagint, Numb. xix. 18, "And the man that is cleansed shall take hyssop, and βάψει εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, *dip it into water*." From the New Testament we can furnish no example of this verb with εἰς and the accusative. The word occurs only in three passages of the Greek Scriptures, and two of these are characterised by peculiarities which may hereafter claim a word of explanation.

2. We find βάπτω often construed with ἐν, occasionally with πρός, and the dative, a formula which is commonly rendered *dip in*; though critics of distinction, holding this to be the dative of instrument, consider the construction unfavourable to the modal sense of the verb. It would, perhaps, be imprudent to stand a siege in such a fortress. The shade of meaning may indeed be singularly varied by alterations in syntax; but, in the present instance, the ground to be gained by either party would not, we are satisfied, justify a hard-fought battle.

3. Kindred to the preceding construction is βάπτω followed by a dative without the preposition. Strabo, quoted by Dr. Gale, speaking of the "wild sport" of elephant-hunting, states that the Arabs used "arrows χολῇ βεβαμμένοις, *dipped in the gall*" of serpents. This construction is not of frequent occurrence, at least when

the verb is taken in its primary signification; and it does not seem to demand any particular remark.

4. The syntax of βάπτω with the genitive, of which there are some examples, presents a less manageable construction, and little light has been cast upon it by our more eminent controversialists. An instance meets us in Luke xvi. 24: "Send Lazarus, that he may βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ὕδατος *dip the tip of his finger of water.*" On this passage Stuart has the following note:—"ὕδατος, the genitive of instrument, i.e., *that he may wet his finger WITH water*, which is a rendering that seems to accord more exactly with the syntactical construction of the sentence."—*Mode of Bapt.*, p. 25. Kuinöl, in his able Commentary on the Historical Books of the New Testament, adopts a summary method of eliminating the difficulty. "Ὑδατος, he informs us, is for ἐφ' ὕδατος, used instead of εἰς ὕδωρ,—which is, of course, unspeakably sage and satisfactory! Were such wholesale and unscrupulous use of what are imagined to be syntactical equivalents, admissible in exegesis, all difficulty and all precision would vanish simultaneously from the structural interpretation of language. That βάπτειν ὕδατος, and βάπτειν εἰς ὕδωρ convey different meanings, is obvious to the veriest smatterer in Greek, while the resources of the most profound and accomplished scholarship may be requisite for elucidating the precise difference. The point is not devoid of interest; but to do it justice would carry us too far from our object. Besides, it will be found partially illustrated under the subsequent observation.

5. We discover a somewhat similar construction of



βάπτω with the preposition ἀπό and the genitive. We do not remember to have met this peculiarity in the ancient classics, and, so far as it affects Hellenistic Greek, it would seem to form the mere echo of a corresponding expression in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. The subjoined example, as adduced and canvassed by Stuart, will serve for illustration. Lev. iv. 17: “*And the priest shall SMEAR OVER or MOISTEN (βάψει) his finger, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος, by or with the blood of the bullock; וְטָבַל מִן הַדָּם*. When the sense of plunging into is directly and fully expressed in Hebrew, it is by using the preposition בְּ after the verb טָבַל. \* \* \* But מִן is sometimes used (as in the example above) before the noun designating the liquid element made use of; and then the Seventy have imitated this in such a way that we are constrained to render their version as I have done above.”—p. 23. The constraint to which Professor Stuart has yielded, Dr. Carson is not prepared to recognise, and his views of language conduct him to a very different interpretation of the formula. “When ἀπό follows βάπτω,” he says, “it respects the point from which the finished dipping has proceeded. βάπτω ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος, *I dip it from the blood*. The blood is the point from which the thing dipped proceeded, after the operation.”—*Baptism*, p. 51. Both these attempts at explanation are, for different reasons, manifestly exceptionable and unsatisfactory. Professor Stuart’s consists merely of an empirical adjustment of English to Greek, without even pretending to found on any established principle. Dr. Carson’s assumes, as a basis, the purely local sense of the preposition, without a particle of proof,

and erects on the assumption an exact and well-proportioned theory. In this interesting construction, as it appears to us, the leading thought is that of obtaining, by the *action* of βάπτω, some portion of the fluid for an ulterior purpose. Under this view, what our ablest and most recent lexicographers have styled “the partitive use of ἀπό,” seems legitimately applicable, and furnishes for the majority of occurrences a law of plain meaning and easy development. Thus αἰς ἀπὸ λήϊδος denotes *a share of the spoil*; and βάψασα ποντίας ἁλός, from the Hecuba of Euripides, refers to *salt water obtained by dipping a vessel into the sea*. In the latter example, though the preposition is not used, the construction exhibits no substantive feature of diversity. To the partitive application of ἀπό, therefore, and the corresponding usage of the genitive, we are disposed to look generally for a satisfactory account of this perplexing specimen of Greek Syntax, while we advance it rather as a suggestion, to be valued at what it is worth, than as an ultimate or dogmatical solution.

Intimately related in structure to this class of examples, which we derive chiefly from the ceremonial purifications of the ancient economy, are the two well-known passages in Daniel, respecting the awful judgment which God pronounced and executed upon Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. iv. 30, (33, Auth. version,) “He was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, Καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δρόσου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐβάφθη, and *his body was wet with the dew of heaven*.” In Dan. v. 21, the same expression is repeated without the slightest alteration. These texts form the battle-ground of many a fierce though bloodless

contest among the controversialists. In entering upon the consideration of them we notice, as somewhat remarkable, that the Baptists, the fast friends of literal interpretation, cannot approach these verses without displaying an ardent, if not suspicious, affection for the beauties of trope and figure. But is there not a cause? The literal exposition, it is evident, possesses no affinity for the modal sense of βάπτω; nor is it practicable either to force or flatter these discordant elements into a state of reconciliation. The dew manifestly fell upon Nebuchadnezzar—its diamond drops were not collected into a pond, or other receptacle, that the monarch might be plunged into the crystal depths. Influenced by the indubitable facts of the case, some front-rank men among our opponents have been betrayed into a surrender fatal to the cause which they defend. “It seems very clear,” observes Dr. Gale, “that both Daniel and his translators designed to express the great dew Nebuchadnezzar should be exposed to, more emphatically, by saying he should lie in dew, and be covered with it all over, as if he had been *dipped*: for that is so much like being dipped, as at most to differ no more than *being in*, and *being put in*; so that the metaphor is very easy, and not in the least strained.”—*Reflections*, p. 150. But who does not perceive that the difference which this writer treats as insignificant, is just the difference between the *modal* and *non-modal* acceptation of the verb, and that his uncritical and imprudent admission has laid bare to the sword of the enemy the bosom of his beloved system? Dr. Carson adopts more skilful tactics, and exhibits superior circumspection. Abandoning several unfortunate

positions in the line of defence attempted by Gale and Cox, he rests the tropical exposition of the passage mainly on the great principle that "one mode of wetting is figured as another mode of wetting, by the liveliness of the imagination." With the principle itself we have no quarrel, believing it entitled to "a local habitation and a name" in the region of figurative language; but we may perhaps presently adduce sufficient grounds for questioning the justness of its application to the case under review.

Dr. Carson's usual accuracy appears to have forsaken him, in introducing to his readers these passages from Daniel, and his discussion of them we hold to be incapable of affording rational satisfaction.

1. He introduces them inaccurately. In Dan. iv. 30, and v. 21, "this word," he informs us, "is rendered by *wet* in our version." What word? The only answer supplied by the context is *the word βάπτω*. Now, it is almost superfluous to state that βάπτω is not rendered in our version at all; inasmuch as our version does not profess to be taken from the Septuagint, but aspires to the honour of representing the Chaldee original. In Dan. iv. 15, (Sep. 12,) the authorized version has "*let it be wet*," where the Greek rendering is Κοιτασθήσεται, "he shall be put to bed," or "shall make his bed." Surely, in this example, *wet* is not the translation of Κοιτάζω.

2. His reasoning on the passages adopts almost exclusively for its basis the Greek rendering, and not the Chaldee original, while he avails himself of their assumed correspondence. Not only are the references to the original trifling and incidental, but they appear purely in



the form of unsupported assertions, borrowed from Cox and Gale. No effort is made to prove, by examples, or otherwise, the modal sense of  $\text{עָבַד}$ , though Dr. Carson asks triumphantly, "How can mode be excluded, if it is in both the original and the translation?" Had he confined his remarks to  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ , as the term whose meaning it was his avowed object to ascertain and vindicate, the procedure, so far, would have brought upon him no breath of animadversion. He had an unquestionable right to canvass the Septuagint rendering, and extract from it whatever amount of testimony it could bear in favour of his cause, without the slightest regard to the ability or faithfulness of the Greek translators. But as he advanced a claim to the joint support of Chaldee and Septuagint, he was bound in honour, and in common justice to the interests which he espoused, to show that his claim had a solid foundation. We are fully aware that in many instances there exists no accurate correspondence between a translation and the original; but as Dr. Carson asserted its existence in the case before us, the assertion should have been sustained by evidence.

As these occurrences of  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$  involve some peculiar principles and difficulties, they are of sufficient importance to warrant a more particular and detailed examination. We observe then—

I. That Baptist writers have signally failed in their attempts to confine the original of these passages to a modal application. This remark is not to be understood as including Dr. Carson, who stands exempted from all imputation of failure, by discreetly abstaining from any

assault upon the Chaldee. Into his first edition he had indeed copied a statement of Gale, characterised by an imposing parade of Oriental learning ; but in the second edition, we observe, he consulted his reputation as a scholar and critic by quietly omitting it altogether. The authorities, which form no inconsiderable part of Dr. Gale's proof, that the term in the Chaldee necessarily implies *immersion*, are Buxtorf, Castell, &c. ! and he appeals above all to " the constant use of the word." Now, on looking into the instances cited by Buxtorf, in his great Chaldee and Rabbinical Lexicon, we do not find them lending unqualified support to the cause of the learned doctor. The great Hebraist, indeed, plainly regards the passage in Daniel as an instance of dipping, but he shows as plainly that the verb denotes also *to wash*, and has even rendered it *painted*, in a curious example which he quotes from an old Rabbinical author. On the testimony of Castell it is not requisite to bestow a separate notice, as it substantially harmonizes with that of Buxtorf; and in regard to Gale's "*&c.*," we confess our inability to rebut the evidence which may be wrapped up in so mysterious a symbol. In the present day, however, we have access to the testimony of biblical scholars not less learned, and probably far more critical, than those referred to by Dr. Gale. Of these Gesenius, who stands " facile princeps " in the ranks of European Hebrew lexicography, assigns as the primary sense of the Chaldee verb, *to dip in*, *to immerse* ; and in *Pahel* and *Ithpahel*, *rigavit*, *to wet*, *moisten*, and *to be wet*, *moistened*, respectively, under which latter he classes the different occurrences of the term in Daniel. Dr. Lee,

again, probably the first Orientalist in Great Britain, adopts, without hesitation, in Dan. iv. 22, the rendering *made wet*, without noticing any other sense as possessing a better claim to acceptance or originality. On the mere ground of lexical authority, therefore, the confident assertions of the Baptist Doctor do not appear in a very enviable light. It may be desirable to add the testimony of the younger Rosenmüller, whose distinguished critical ability, and extensive acquaintance with Eastern languages, entitle his judgment, on a topic of this nature, to the most respectful consideration. In his *Scholia* on Dan. iv. 15, having adopted as the translation of the disputed clause,—*Et rore coelorum tingetur*, he immediately explains the verb by the terms, *imbuetur, et madidus fiet*, thus precisely coinciding with the view of Gesenius.

We do not forget, however, that Dr. Gale appeals also to the tribunal of “constant use,” from which in common with him we are content to receive the ultimate decision. Let us see, then, how he prosecutes his appeal in the highest court of Critical Justiciary. “It is,” says he, “by this word the Jerusalem Targum renders the Hebrew טָבַל, Lev. iv. 6,”—a word which, he had before asserted, “every one must own signifies dip.” *There*, in sober seriousness, the reader has before him the entire evidence by which Dr. Gale seeks to substantiate his affirmation of constant use! He lays down an universal proposition respecting the application of a term, and he furnishes, as its basis, one solitary example!! To upset this figment of constant use, we have simply to cite Lev. xiii. 6, on which the same Jerusalem Targum employs צָבַע as the rendering of the Hebrew קָבַע to *tread*, or *trample*,

a term commonly applied to the washing of garments by treading upon them. That operation, a philologist of Gale's school would say, necessarily implies previous immersion. But the objection is frivolous, though not vexatious; for whether the garments are put into the water, or the water is made to flow over the garments, these actions are not expressed by the Hebrew verb; and, therefore, the interpreter who possesses a scintilla of the philosophy of language, will not permit himself, or the term, to be imposed upon by matters wholly irrelevant. The verb כָּבַס cares not whether the garments got into the water, or the water came about the garments;—its sole business is to wash them when there by the action of trampling.

We may now permit Dr. Gale to bring up his reserves—the battalion of auxiliary forces which Dr. Carson prudently returned to their own general, not having found them particularly serviceable in the field. “In other places,” he continues, “the word is used \* \* \* always in the same sense, signifying to *immerse* or *drown*—as Exod. xv. 4, in which place the Jerusalem Targum, Jonathan's Paraphrase, and that called Onkelos, the Syriac version, and the Original of Moses, do all use טָבַע, or טָמַע, to signify *immerse*, *plunge*, or *drown*, as our version renders it.” This piece of learning, as it is presented to us, may be disposed of in a summary manner, by observing that the worthy Doctor seems to have fallen upon a wrong scent, having apparently mistaken the Hebrew טָבַע\* for the Chaldee טָבַע, and thus irrepar-

\* Professor Stuart has fallen into the same mistake, or perhaps it is a typographical error.



ably vitiated his logic, while he displayed his lore. He intimates, indeed, with what propriety the reader will now be able to judge, that he considered the case too plain to require from him more detailed evidence in support of his general proposition. We take leave, on the other hand, respectfully to submit, as the fruit of a deliberate review of the facts, that the very learned Dr. Gale has failed to establish his point; and we state farther, in regard to the sense of the original, what all must candidly acknowledge, that in the circumstances specified, *the term cannot possibly denote* LITERAL IMMERSION.

We shall have opportunity of inquiring presently whether the abettors of a figurative solution of the difficulty have succeeded in placing their scheme on a solid philological basis. We observe—

II. That the Septuagint\* renderings do not countenance the doctrine of an exclusively modal sense in the original. Dr. Carson speaks of mode as existing both in the original and in the Greek translation, as if βάπτω were the only Septuagint rendering of the Chaldee verb. Such a statement is calculated to convey a defective, if not an absolutely erroneous impression. Whether βάπτω is limited to the act of immersion, or claims a less restricted meaning, we have the most unexceptionable

\* For the information of the general reader, it may be desirable to state, that in the various editions of the *Septuagint*, the translation of Daniel by Theodotion has been substituted for that of the *Seventy*. The real Septuagint of Daniel bears no testimony on the point before us—the only rendering it supplies of the disputed term being a part of αλλοιόω, founded apparently on a different reading in the Chaldee text.

evidence that the Greek translator of Daniel did not regard **בָּבַע** as denoting mode, and nothing but mode. The overwhelming proof of this position is contained in the fact, that in addition to this verb he has also employed *ἀνλίζομαι* to *lie out at night*, and *κοιτάζω* to *put to bed*, as representatives severally of the same original word. To affirm, therefore, that *dipping in the dew* is the sense sustained by the Chaldee, and embraced in the Greek translation, is to make a palpably deceptive statement. It may be the truth, but it certainly is not the whole truth. *Lying out at night* under the dew, and *being put to bed* in the dew, occupy in the Septuagint a place of authority co-ordinate with *dipping in the dew*—assuming this to be the correct translation of one of the Greek renderings. And hence so far as the testimony of this Greek version is of force, we have the same ground for contending that the Chaldee denotes to *lie out at night*, or *be put to bed*, that the Baptist has for maintaining it to be expressive of the *act of immersion*. This seems plain to a demonstration; for had the Greek translator been satisfied that **בָּבַע** designates exclusively the action of dipping, he would, as a matter of course, have uniformly rendered it accordingly. Whereas, in two of the five instances in which the verb occurs, he has represented it by terms which, it is admitted on all hands, have no reference whatever to mode. This reasoning cannot be subverted by assuming or even proving that *βάπτω* signifies mode, and nothing but mode. The Greek verb might be so limited; but the Septuagint, by the voice of its *varied renderings*, claims for the Chaldee a wider latitude of application, by adopting as its

representatives other terms from which the idea of mode is necessarily excluded. So much for the testimony supplied by this venerable version, and for the views which its translator must have entertained respecting the modal sense of the Chaldee original.

It remains for us to offer a remark on the structure of the clauses in which βάπτω is employed to represent the Chaldee verb. This structure, as in Dan. iv. 30, is briefly—ἀπὸ τῆς δρόσου . . . ἐβάφην, thus translated by Dr. Carson, “His body *was immersed in the dew* ;”—a translation which not only sets aside the peculiarity of construction, but gives the sanction of the author to the loose and unauthorized substitution of one preposition for another. It is obvious that the explanation of the force of ἀπὸ after the verb, which Dr. Carson attempts in another place, can have no *literal* application here ; and equally plain that the partitive sense so clearly established by various writers on Greek philology, is inadequate to furnish a correct solution. Nor does the difficulty appear capable of being abated, much less entirely removed, by comparison with the supposed parallels of βάπτω, constructed with ἀπὸ, in the inspired statement of certain duties connected with the ancient sacerdotal office. “I am not ashamed,” observes Dr. Halley, referring to the passage before us, “to acknowledge I do not understand these words. If they be Greek, I am not scholar enough to translate them. It appears to me that the translator has closely followed the Chaldee idiom, in selecting both the preposition ἀπὸ, and the verb βάπτω, as corresponding, in some respects, to the Chaldee ܒܬܝܬ, which seems, according to the

analogy of the Hebrew and Syriac, sometimes to mean to colour.”—*On the Sacraments*, p. 462. The author concludes that ἐβάφην, so far as he understands it, is an inaccurate rendering of the Chaldee, which he maintains “with Gesenius and the Orientalists,” denotes simply, “he was made wet from the dew.”

In the present inquiry, however, we are not deeply concerned with the accuracy or inaccuracy of the rendering, the great object being to reach the signification of βάπτω in the hands of the Greek translator. Now, it is indubitable that if he intended the verb to be taken in its strictly modal sense, the construction with ἀπὸ is inexplicable on the principles of literal interpretation. There was—there could have been—in the circumstances, no literal immersion either *in* the dew, or *from* the dew. But if the verb, divorced from mode, takes the meaning assigned by Gesenius to the *Pahel* of the Chaldee, then a literal exegesis is both practicable and natural. We have already shown that the Greek translator, by the character and variety of his renderings, exhibits himself as an unbeliever in the strictly modal acceptation of the Chaldee verb. On this ground, and also aware, of the actual circumstances of the case, he could not possibly have contemplated the *literal* dipping of Nebuchadnezzar in the dews of heaven. The contrary supposition involves a double absurdity—as it runs directly counter to the views of the translator, and clashes with the recorded facts. As mode then is, of necessity, excluded from the *letter* of this passage, what is the conclusion to which the interpreter must feel himself absolutely shut up? Clearly this, that if *figurative* interpretation be not



legitimately admissible, the construction in these texts supplies occurrences of βάπτω, from which the common modal sense is excluded by the law of a stern physical impossibility. We observe—

III. In the last place, that the figurative exegesis appears to rest upon an extremely questionable foundation. Dr. Carson's principle, alluded to under a preceding observation, is, that "one mode of wetting is figured as another mode of wetting, by the liveliness of the imagination." I am unable to gather from his statements whether in the instance under review, this "liveliness of imagination" is to be regarded as an attribute of Daniel, or of his translator. If the prophet himself is to have the credit of the fine figure, some effort should have been made to discover, for the tropical exposition, a basis in the meaning of the Chaldee verb; but this Dr. Carson has not even attempted. It is true he has affirmed, after Cox, that the original signifies to dip, but the opposing authorities have not been set aside:—and he has also cited from Gale, the testimony of the ancient Syriac version in support of the same view, but the value of the testimony is simply commended to the credulity of the reader by the assertion of the writer. In regard to the Syriac rendering, the meaning of which should have been proved by the author who availed himself of its evidence, we shall simply remark, that a word whose primary sense, according to Castell and Oberleitner, is *impressit, signavit*, appears rather to require than afford elucidation. Now, till the modal sense of the Chaldee verb be fairly established, we are not warranted to ascribe to Daniel the "liveliness of imagination," which

gave birth to the beautiful figure of immersion in the dew of heaven. This condition every one will perceive to be essential to the very foundation of a figurative exegesis.

There might possibly arise, on a hasty perusal of Dan. iv. 15, a general presumption in favour of figurative application, in consequence of the allegorical mode of expression at the commencement of the verse. But as Rosenmüller has acutely observed, there is a transition from allegory to common description, the latter part of the verse not applying to a tree, but to the person of the fallen monarch. Besides, the advocate of a figurative immersion should beware lest his interpretation open the door to a figurative, or, it may be, neological infliction of the other judgments denounced against Nebuchadnezzar.

We turn, however, to the Greek version, convinced that the term βάπτω has in reality originated the proposed figurative acceptance. In point of fact, had the Septuagint avoided the use of that term, in the two instances in which it occurs, as it did in the three others where the Chaldee verb is the same, on neither side of the controversy would there have existed any demand for the exercise of a lively imagination. Let us then calmly and candidly test the figurative pretensions of the rendering adopted in this version. Supposing the Greek translator to have discovered in the Chaldee a vivid and beautiful metaphor, which he happily transfused into the Greek by the use of βάπτω, is it not singular that, in the greater number of instances, he substitutes for this term of poetic fire and impressiveness

others which are miserably frigid and prosaic? Dr. Carson eloquently stigmatises, as *soulless*, the unfortunate critic who would expound the application of the dew to Nebuchadnezzar, on the principle of conforming the language of the narrative to the standard of physical fact. But what shall be said of the Greek translator, whose rendering this moment proves him to be in the best sense highly imaginative and spirited; while the next, in attempting to translate the self-same word, he furnishes melancholy proof that he pitifully misunderstands its meaning, and is utterly insensible to the lovely image which it contains? We confess ourselves unable to ascertain how these things hang together. If the translator really appreciated the alleged figure in the original, why not present it uniformly on the page of his version? If he did not, instead of meriting a eulogium as a man of refined literary taste, there is no evidence that in any of his different renderings he had the slightest intention of conveying the figure in question. That the same writer should be at once soulless, and eminently distinguished for a nice appreciation of the finer and more elevated beauties of style and sentiment, if not a self-evident contradiction, seems at least to reside in the neighbourhood of absurdity. Dr. Halley's view of this point, though in the main sound and satisfactory, seems not altogether accurate in regard to the extremely literal character which he assigns generally to the Greek version of Daniel. Theodotion, the author of that version, he describes as "creeping upon the literalities of his original, and afraid of indulging his fancy even in the accommodation of his preposition to Greek usage." We

are far from charging the writer with doing injustice to Theodotion, though we consider the description not strictly applicable to the version at large. Indeed, we are not prepared to give the translator credit for creeping over the original at all, believing his version to be little more than a recension of the true Septuagint; while in reference to the *chasms* which he was compelled to fill up from the original, he has satisfied all biblical scholars of his incompetency to translate Hebrew and Chaldee. So far then as Theodotion is justly responsible, we cordially adopt the language of Halley, when he expresses his confident assurance that in no other word of his version does the fancy of the author "ever reflect a sunbeam of poetry."

Some may consider it difficult to reconcile the assertion of the wretched servility of Theodotion's renderings with the fact, that in as many passages he has given us no fewer than three different representations of the same Chaldee verb. This circumstance, it may be urged, certainly establishes the existence of such a measure of freedom in the translation as should protect it against the unqualified charge of a "creeping literality." But the objection may be turned without much effort. Had Theodotion been a more accomplished Orientalist, and possessed of fuller confidence in his own fitness to deal with the terms and constructions of these passages, the strong probability is, that his translation would not have been adorned with these rich but anomalous varieties. Enlightened conviction on his part, respecting the correctness of one rendering, would have prevented the comfort or the infliction of several renderings. On



the other hand, this very diversity supplies a powerful argument against the view of those who, in the exercise of a refining criticism, would extract a splendid figurative sense out of the rendering of a translator, whose version contains invincible evidence not only that he was a stranger to the *mens divinator* of poetry, but that he perceived not, in the sacred original, the poetic beauty which critics have detected in his sorry translation.

On the subject of figurative interpretation, we have some additional considerations to adduce, involving certain strictures on the doctrines maintained by Dr. Carson; but we shall reserve them for a branch of the discussion which is more immediately connected with the mode of Christian baptism. In the meantime, we close our examination of the passages from Daniel, by reminding the reader that our opponents have not proved, against such Orientalists as Gesenius and Lee, the modal meaning of the verb in the Chaldee original; while the author of the Greek version, on which a figurative exegesis is mainly, if not exclusively based, presents a rich specimen of "the liveliness of imagination," from which the modern Baptist has perhaps reaped an ephemeral advantage! We wish it also to be remembered that the relation of βάπτω to the religious ordinance is indirect and remote, though by no means unimportant; and we appeal to the judgment of every candid mind, duly acquainted with the subject, whether the Baptist exposition of its occurrences in Daniel is not clogged with a variety of formidable and hitherto unanswered objections.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

### SECONDARY SENSE OF ΒΑΪΝΩ.

SECONDARY SENSE OF ΒΑΪΝΩ, TO DYE.—DR. CARSON OPPOSED TO HIS BRETHREN ON THIS POINT.—DIRECT PROOF THAT THE VERB DENOTES TO DIE, IRRESPECTIVE OF MODE.—EXAMPLES FROM GREEK AUTHORS.—CURIOUS MISTRANSLATIONS OF GALE, COPIED BY CARSON.—COMMENTS AND STRICTURES.—EVIDENCE FROM THE SEPTUAGINT AND NEW TESTAMENT.—ARGUMENT FROM THE STRUCTURE OF CERTAIN PASSAGES, WELL STATED BY HALLEY.—DERIVATIVES OF ΒΑΪΝΩ SUSTAINING THE PRECEDING VIEWS.

THE secondary sense of βάπτω comes now to engage our attention. That the verb signifies *to dye*, in some instances, without the most distant reference to any specific mode, and in others with a distinct intimation that dipping formed no part of the process, may be established by the evidence of examples to which no reasonable exception can be taken. On this branch of the investigation Dr. Carson has rendered valuable service to the cause of truth, by boldly and successfully combating the unphilosophical criticisms of Gale and other writers belonging to his own denomination. Of the soundness and excellence of the principles which he adopts in regard to secondary senses in general, there can be but one opinion, while he obtains an easy and

decisive victory over his friends, in the application of these principles to the meaning of βάπτω. But when he proceeds to deal with the evidence in detail, this part of his treatise betrays a number of singular mistakes both in translation and criticism, which, whether bearing intimately or otherwise on the ulterior question at issue, must go to diminish considerably the influence, and lower the imposing pretensions of the work in which they are found.

The proof of this assertion will appear in the course of producing evidence to the fact, that βάπτω in its secondary acceptation, denotes *to dye*. From the following plain testimonies, it will be perceived that this meaning occupies a safe and unassailable position.

Herodotus, Lib. vii. 67, speaks of ἔμματα βεβαμμένα, “*dyed* or coloured garments,” without any specification of mode. It will probably be imagined, from what is known otherwise respecting the art of the ancient dyer, that the presumption is in favour of dipping; and as the example presents no evidence on the other side, it must be considered less decisive than some of those which follow.

Aristotle *de Coloribus*, cap. iv., towards the close, says, “The colours of things βαπτομένων *dyed*, are changed by the causes stated.” This example refers, in the most general terms, to the result of the process, apart altogether from any given mode of operation; but we are assured, on the most unexceptionable authority, that Aristotle applied the verb to cases in which *dipping* was necessarily excluded. The subjoined example is in evidence.

Aristotle, *Hist. Animal.* Lib. v. c. 15, says, Θλιβομένος δὲ βάπτει καὶ ἀνθίζει τὴν χεῖρα,—“But *being pressed*, it *dyes* and colours the hand.” The exclusion of dipping in this case is so manifest and incontestable, and the passage so perfectly lucid, as to be incapable of illustration. Instead of the hand being dipped into the colouring matter, the colouring matter is placed in the hand, by the mere pressure of which the dyeing process is completed. It is amazing that Dr. Gale could resist such forcible evidence, and that intelligent Baptists for generations remained utterly insensible to its clearness and cogency.

From Aristophanes Dr. Gale adduced the following example, which Dr. Carson has adopted without the slightest alteration, thus patronizing, and transmitting to other generations, the gross mistakes of his learned predecessor.—“Magnes, an old comic poet of Athens, used the Lydian music, *shaved his face*, and *smeared it over with tawny washes*.” We cite the original, as it is found in the *Hippeis*, Act I., Scene 3, Ἀνθίζων, καὶ ψηνίζων, καὶ βαπτόμενος βατραχείοις, which contains no reference whatever to the pleasant operation of shaving, nor to the application of tawny washes *to the face*. The correct view of the passage, as any Greek scholar will instantly discover, is, that Aristophanes speaks of Magnes as “Imitating the Lydians, and writing a play called *Ψήνες*, and smearing himself with frog-coloured [paints or washes.]” Gale, we are of opinion, was misled by an old Latin translation of the poet, which closely corresponds with *his* English; while the best apology that can be offered for Dr. Carson is, that he was too credulous or confiding to institute an independent examination



for himself. The probable foundation of the error, we have noticed in a statement made by Suidas, which was repeated by Stephanus, and echoed, of course, by the tribe of minor lexicographers. That Dr. Carson should have unconsciously sanctioned Gale's mistranslation must appear more singular, when we take into account the fact that it strongly militates against a principle which he considered highly important, and well established. Referring, in another part of his work, to the verb βαπτίζω, he says, "It may apply to any part, as well as to the whole; but whenever it is used without its regimen expressed, or understood in phrases much used, it applies to the whole body. When a part only is dipped, the part is mentioned, or some part is excepted." And again,—“When no part is mentioned or excepted, the whole body is always meant.” Now, in the quotation from Aristophanes, by adopting Gale's erroneous rendering, Dr. Carson has limited the action of βάπτω *to the face*, though no exception is made in the Greek, no part is mentioned, and none omitted, nor any warrant afforded for such limitation, *by a phrase much used*. The Baptist often inquires, in mockery of our system, by what authority we apply the water in the ordinance of baptism to the face of the subject, rather than to any other part of the person. We might be tempted to return the taunt by sending him to his literary champions Drs. Gale and Carson, to ascertain what authority they had for applying their tawny washes *to the face* of the comic poet Magnes! The truth is, that had some unhappy Pædobaptist, fallen into these singular blunders, there would have been no end to the loud and super-

cilious exposure of incompetency and want of scholarship among the abettors of infant sprinkling.

Again, it may be noticed, in connection with another part of the same example, that if βαπτόμενος denotes *smeared*, as these writers have concurred in rendering it, the unavoidable inference is, that the same verb expresses at least *two* modes, contrary to Dr. Carson's solemn and often repeated asseverations. The washes, or paints, in this instance, were applied to the *face*! of Magnes, by *smearing*, or *rubbing*, which is certainly a modal operation, and the verb employed to indicate it is βαπτω. Thus, the author's translation, copied from his panegyricized predecessor, upsets his own favourite doctrine; nor can it recover its position until Baptist critics are able to show that *smearing* means either *dipping* or *dyeing*. The force of the observation will appear more distinctly in the discussion of the succeeding testimony.

Hippocrates, describing the effect produced by the application of a certain liquid, says,—“ἐπειδάν επιστάξῃ, ἱμάτια βάπτεται”—“The garments are *dyed*, when it *drops upon them*.” This instance is perfectly conclusive against all who allege that mode is universally either expressed or implied in the use of this verb. The process stated by the father of medicine, as Dr. Carson has well observed, is not dyeing by dipping. He is in error, however, when he asserts that Hippocrates “employs βάπτω to denote dyeing by *dropping* the dyeing liquid on the thing dyed.” The *dyeing* alone is expressed by βάπτω, the dropping of the liquid by another term altogether different. Indeed, the great critical value of the example consists in its stripping the verb completely of all claim to modal

signification, by employing another term to denote the manner in which the *dye* was applied to the garments. This circumstance suggests an instructive point of difference between the use of the verb here and in the preceding quotation. When Magnes is represented as applying the tawny washes *to his face*, Aristophanes does not use one verb to express the *mode*, and another to indicate the result. Βάπτω alone serves the purpose, and the joint scholarship of Dr. Gale and Dr. Carson assigns to it the sense of *smearing*, which is evidently a modal sense. That this meaning too is literal and not figurative will not be readily disputed; and, in fact, it has been expressly asserted by Dr. Carson. We are furnished, then, with detailed evidence of irresistible cogency for assigning to this verb the sense of *dipping*; and the authority of the highest names among our opponents assures us, that it denotes also *smearing*;—that is, the same verb denotes two different modes,—a principle which not only annihilates one of Dr. Carson's self-evident canons, but is utterly subversive of the foundation of his reasonings on the mode of baptism. Admit, as we have intimated, the correctness of his translation, and this part of his system necessarily falls to the ground.

In the *Batrachomyomachia*, the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, a mock-heroic poem, falsely ascribed to Homer, depicting the sad fate of one of the champions, called Crambophagus, who fell mortally wounded, the poet says—v. 218—

Κάδδ' ἔπεισ' οὐδ' ἀνένευσεν, ἐβάπτετο δ' ἄιματι λίμνη—

Not to dwell on the trifling circumstance that Dr. Carson

mistakes both the name and genus of the fallen combatant, this passage affords occasion for adverting to the somewhat curious history of what may be styled a traditional mistranslation. So far as we have been able to trace the genealogy of the blunder, it originated with Dr. Gale,—no very uncommon event in the life of that learned author—and it has since been honoured by the patronage of scholars, who greatly excelled the doctor, if not in the extent of their literary attainments, at least in their character for acuteness, and general critical ability. Gale renders the passage thus ;—“ He *breathless* fell, and the lake was tinged with blood.” Whether the correctness of this rendering was challenged from the days of its author, till the appearance of Dr. Carson’s treatise on Baptism, we are not aware ; but in that publication it was slightly modified, as follows :—“ He fell, *and breathed no more*, and the lake was tinged with his blood.” The next leading name, in countenancing this singular version, is that of Dr. Halley, whose renderings generally evince the accuracy of sound scholarship ; and who, in regard to βαπτίζω, has publicly brought against Carson the charge of “ following Dr. Gale with good heart through mistranslations as well as correct versions.” Yet, with all his known talent and acquirements, he has adopted in substance the version, and in terms the mistake of Dr. Carson. Here are the words :—“ He fell, *and breathed no more*, and the lake was *baptized* with his blood.” The substitution by this author of *baptized* for *tinged*, which is the reading in the version of his predecessors, will not be considered an improved rendering of the verb ἐβάπτιστο.



Now, the blunder which disfigures the works of these learned authors, and which has been handed down by tradition from the great ancestor of modern Immersionists, consists in absolutely mistaking one Greek verb for another. The action of *breathing* they all understand to be expressed by a term which has no more connection with breathing than it has with walking or flying. Not a syllable is uttered by the writer of the mock-heroic poem, respecting the *respiration* of his little cold-blooded hero; and, indeed, the true nature of the case, had it been known to such a man as Dr. Carson, might well have abated the nuisance of his sarcasm, and disposed him, in view of his own fallibility, to extend a measure of indulgence to the ignorance and mistakes of weak brethren.

The attempt of Professor Stuart, to translate this formidable Greek sentence, cannot be regarded as much more successful. His version runs thus:—"He fell, *without even looking upwards*, and the lake was tinged with his blood." There is at least something novel in this translation, but the *new*, we apprehend, is not *true*. Whether it is a common practice with frogs, when mortally wounded, to *look upwards*, before they expire, my acquaintance with natural history does not enable me to determine; and I am equally at a loss to discover how an author, of Stuart's varied and exact scholarship, could present such a specimen of his acquaintance with Greek literature. The upward look of a dying frog would be a study for a painter!

We are prepared to exhibit, in contrast with these mistranslations, the correct rendering of the passage.

The verb is ἀνένευσεν, which Gale, Carson, and their followers, evidently mistook for ἀνεπνέυσεν, and Stuart referred to the root νέω, while in reality it is compounded of ἀνά *up*, and νέω *to swim*; and thus plainly signifies *to swim up, emerge, rise to the surface*. Accordingly, the true meaning of the original becomes equally manifest and natural,—“He fell, *and rose no more*, and the lake was tinged with blood;” or, as the poet Cowper has expressed it with equal elegance and fidelity to the Greek—

“So fell Crambophagus; and from that fall  
*Never arose*, but reddening with his blood  
 The wave, and wallowing,” &c.

Even in this decisive example Dr. Gale still contends, in defiance of the established principles both of literal and figurative interpretation, that βάπτω retains at least hyperbolically the modal sense of immersion. This untenable view is met by Carson with unsparing and indignant exposure. “What a monstrous paradox in Rhetoric,” he exclaims, “is the figuring of the dipping of a lake in the blood of a mouse!”—[Frog, he should have said.] “Never was there such a figure. The lake is not said to be *dipped in* the blood, but *died with* the blood.” We are content to leave Dr. Gale in the hands of his Baptist admirer and antagonist, while we go on to state—

That the secondary sense of the term belongs also to Hellenistic Greek, and is exemplified in the Septuagint rendering of טביל in Ezek. xxiii. 15, where “the images of the Chaldeans, portrayed with vermillion,” are

represented as “exceeding\* in *dyed attire*—*παρὰβαπτὰ*—upon their heads.” *Βάμμα*, another derivative of the verb, is several times repeated in a single verse, Judges v. 30, *Σκῦλα βαμμάτων τῷ Σισάρα, σκῦλα βαμμάτων ποικιλίας, βαμμάτων ποικιλτῶν, κ. τ. λ.*—thus translated by Schleusner,—*Spolia colorata, spolia versicoloria, colores artificum variantium*—“There are spoils of dyed garments for Sisara, spoils of various dyed garments, dyed embroidered garments.”—*Brenton’s Septuagint*.

It were easy to swell the list of examples from later Greek writers, including Diodorus Siculus, Josephus, and Lucian; but as the signification, for which we contend, is already placed on an immoveable basis, we pass to an instance from the New Testament, which involves some peculiar considerations. Rev. xix. 13, *Καὶ περὶ βεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι*, rendered in the authorized version,—“And he was clothed with a vesture *dipped in blood*.” It is remarkable that the Syriac and Ethiopic versions of this passage represent *βεβαμμένον*, by a term which denotes *sprinkled*; and it is yet more remarkable that Origen, citing the verse from the Greek text of his day, employs *ἐρραντισμένον*, whether as a substitute or an exposition, it is perhaps impossible to determine. On these facts, several Pædobaptist authors have, with great, and, we are persuaded, honest confidence, founded an argument against immersion; but the evidence adduced, so far as it possesses credibility, rather appears *favourable* to the recognition of a different reading in the original. It must also be

\* “Having also richly dyed attire upon their heads.”—*Sept. Trans.* by Sir L. Brenton.

remembered that were *sprinkle* proved to be the meaning of βάπτω, by the testimony of the most unexceptionable witnesses, the circumstance would merely create a general presumption, or probability, in favour of that mode of administering baptism. The advocate of sprinkling or affusion, as an enlightened and candid controversialist, would still acknowledge that no solid ground was gained till he had established a corresponding latitude in the application of βαπτίζω, and its derivatives.

Dr. Carson adopts the authorized version of the passage, and yet describes the tunic of the warrior, “ as *emblematically dyed* to represent his work before it was begun. Of this combination of the primary and secondary sense, in the same occurrence, a plausible defence might be offered, by alleging that *to dip in blood* necessarily implies *dyeing*, and that, therefore, it is not incorrect to employ indifferently either mode of expression. But, with all respect, we would ask, is the influence of Greek construction to have no weight, or its voice to be entirely stifled in determining the right translation? When an author not only acknowledges, but proves, by sufficient evidence, that βάπτω has the sense of *dyeing*, and when its syntax obviously countenances, if it does not demand, that meaning, why not promptly introduce it into the rendering of the sentence? In a former example, precisely identical in structure with the present, we found Dr. Carson contending eloquently, and triumphantly, in opposition to the absurd extravagance of Gale, that the verb denoted *dyeing*, and not *dipping*. Now, the expressions,—“ The lake was tinged with blood,” and “ a garment dyed with blood,” exhibit, in



the original, so exactly the same form and regimen, that there exists in the one case no sound principle to justify a departure from the translation adopted in the other. Both clearly exemplify the secondary sense, though it by no means receives from each the same amount of evidence. For such reasons, we have rejected the arrangement of Dr. Carson, as unauthorized, and have classified this interesting occurrence under the secondary acceptation of the verb.

That βάπτω denotes to *dye*, without regard to mode, and even where immersion is in terms excluded, the preceding examples place beyond the pale of candid disputation. There remains, however, an additional element of proof, which, if not more convincing in its nature, is at least calculated to afford higher gratification to the mind of the true philologist. We allude to the interesting fact, that the secondary meaning, instead of hanging loosely upon the outskirts of clauses and sentences, has seized upon their most intimate connexions, and entered deeply into the structural fabric of the Greek language. As Dr. Halley, so far as we are aware, was the first to direct public attention to the existence and value of this branch of evidence, we shall present in his own words the statement and illustration of its character. "The best proof," he observes, "of a complete change of meaning, is a corresponding change in the syntax, accommodating itself to the deflection of sense. When we read of the use of the word in dyeing wool, or colouring the hair, or staining the hand, the instances as adduced by Dr. Carson are quite satisfactory. But the syntax is not affected. The wool, the hair, or the

hand, which would be dipped, if the dyeing were accomplished by dipping, is still the object of the verb. In the phrases, to dip the wool and to stain the wool, the syntax is the same. But if the syntax is so varied as to make not the thing coloured, but the colour itself, the object of the verb—as when we say to dye a purple—the secondary sense has then renounced all dependence upon the primary, and established itself by a new law of syntax, enacted by usage to secure its undisturbed possession. Dr. Carson might have produced a proof passage from Plato—*De Repub.* lib. iv. 429—as of that passage respecting the work of dyers, he has given us the inexcusably inaccurate translation of Gale, of which, however, I adduce only the clause relating to our purpose,—‘no matter what dye they are dipped in.’ Would any one think that this was the translation made by Dr. Gale, and cited by Dr. Carson, of the words, *ἐὰν τέ τις ἄλλα χρώματα βάπτῃ, ἐὰν τε καὶ ταῦτα*, whether any one dye other colours, or these also. Whether the *χρῶμα* was the dye into which the wool was dipped, according to the version cited, or the colour imparted to it, is not the question. Be it which it may, it is the object of *βάπτῃ*; it has gained in the syntax the place of the material subjected to the process; and therefore pleads a law of language, that *βάπτω* in the passage does not and cannot mean to dip, as the *colour* cannot be dipped, whatever may be done with the wool.”—p. 454.

Having now submitted in detail, with such comments as we deemed necessary, plain and cogent evidence of both the primary and secondary senses of the verb *βάπτω*, we may refer to some of the words immediately

derived from it, for farther illustration of the principles already established. Terms of this class frequently imitate the example of their primitive in presenting both significations, though some are appropriated almost exclusively in the primary, others in the secondary sense. Thus the verbal βαπτρός in several passages means *dipped*, while instances are not wanting in which it must be rendered *dyed*, as in the *Aves of Aristophanes*, v. 287, where it has been supposed to denote “bright-coloured.” But the example, though evidently to the point, belongs rather to the tropical department. The term is also applied to the tempering of iron and other metals—an appropriation which Dr. Halley conceives to rest on the same independent footing with the sense of dyeing. “Iron,” he states, “is dipped *in* water, but tempered *with* water;” and in support of his view, he cites the authority of the Scholiast on the Ajax of Sophocles, v. 650, founding confidently on the syntax of the passage, and protesting against Dr. Carson’s different rendering of an analogous construction, as a heresy in interpretation.

The noun βάμμα denotes the substance in which an object is dipped, such as sauce; also dye, paint, &c., without reference to the mode of applying it. That the secondary sense should thus assert its entire independence on the primary, is altogether in accordance with the state of the preceding evidence; and we shall have additional proof of the fact in canvassing some of the figurative acceptations.

Another derivative, the *usage* of which exhibits considerable peculiarity, is βάφειν, a *dipping*, or *dyeing*, also

employed by Plutarch, to denote the *freshness* or *strength* of wine. In the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, v. 612, the phrase χαλκῶν βαφαί has often puzzled the students of the dramatic literature of Greece; and according to some of the highest and most recent authorities, the meaning “is yet uncertain.” It may be understood either of the *tempering* or of the *edge* of brass; and the suffrages of the critics appear to be pretty equally divided between these two interpretations.

Closely related to βάφη are βάφεις, a *dyer*, and βαφεῖον a *dyer's establishment*—derivatives from the verb in its secondary sense, and not necessarily sustaining any modal relation whatever to the primary. The exact use of some of these terms will become at once apparent, and instructive to the student of exegesis, when we come to consider the mutual connexion of the two leading senses of the verb, and to detect the false principles tacitly acknowledged by our most distinguished opponents. Dr. Carson introduces, as immediate derivatives from βάπτω, the terms βάπτισις, ἁβάπτιστος, and ἁβάπτιστον, all of which the acquaintance of a school-boy with the elements of Greek etymology, will enable him to trace, not to that verb, but to its descendant βαπτίζω. Such points are doubtless minute, and may not affect essentially the great questions of the baptismal discussion; yet they supply the best weapons for cutting the sinews of a contemptuous dogmatism, and routing from the field all abusive, perhaps unfounded, assumptions of superior scholarship.

We might, without difficulty, enlarge the list of derivatives from βάπτω, as there exist various terms of the



same general character with the preceding—some of them canvassed by writers on the Baptist controversy, others remaining unclaimed by the disputants on either side; but the examples already adduced will serve to exhibit, with sufficient evidence and clearness, the character of the root or stem, and the relation subsisting between it and the different branches. The comments offered will, we trust, contribute to the accomplishment of an object infinitely more valuable. It is by close attention to individual words, and to the functions which they discharge in continued speech, that we arrive at a comprehensive and practical acquaintance with the laws of language. The thorough examination of a term often secures important facilities for the interpretation of a tongue. When, therefore, we investigate philosophically the senses of βάπτω, with its principal applications, and those of its derivatives, we are necessarily conducting processes and reaching results which are not confined to these words, but characterise universally the exact study both of sacred and profane literature. The importance of the principle involved in this procedure every laborious student of the word of God in the originals will be prepared fully to appreciate, while its intrinsic excellence, as developed in practice, must certainly constitute its highest recommendation. Some may be disposed to turn away from the details, as dry, irksome, and uninteresting; but an ample reward of persevering labour in the field of Scripture philology, is neither doubtful nor distant.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### FIGURATIVE USE OF ΒΑΠΤΩ, AND RELATION BETWEEN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SENSE.

FIGURATIVE USE INTERESTING CHIEFLY AS IT INVOLVES AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE.—EXAMPLES.—FULL STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE—AND DEFENCE AGAINST THE INCORRECT TRANSLATIONS OF GALE.—CONNECTION OF THE SECONDARY SENSE WITH THE PRIMARY—ITS NATURE ILLUSTRATED.—STRICTURES ON THE RENDERINGS OF GALE AND CARSON.—GENERAL CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THIS BRANCH OF THE DISCUSSION.

ON the figurative use of βάπτω and its derivatives, we should deem it superfluous to offer a solitary remark, were it not that a principle of considerable value to the interpreter is involved in the discussion of this part of the subject. The industry of authors has not succeeded in making out an extensive catalogue of examples, in which the proper meaning has given place to the tropical; and, so far as we have observed, the instances produced, are chiefly founded on the secondary acceptance. Marcus Antoninus, the imperial moralist, is quoted by Dr. Gale, as saying in his *Meditations*, Lib. 5, sect. 16, βάπτεται γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν φαντασιῶν ἡ ψυχὴ,—which he thus renders—“For the thoughts dip or tincture the mind.” Had he condescended to follow the construction of the

original, his translation must have been—"For the soul is tinctured by the thoughts;"—but a version, so easy and unexceptionable, would not have served his purpose, inasmuch as he must have felt the extreme awkwardness of representing the soul as *dipped* by the thoughts, and yet he was not prepared to sacrifice his favourite *dip*. A moment's calm reflection will convince any candid mind, that this is a figurative expression, having for its basis the secondary sense of the verb.

Another example will complete our present purpose, by bringing out distinctly the principle to which we have alluded. Aristophanes, in his *Acharn.* v. 112, assigns to one of his characters the following language—"Ἴνα μὴ σε βάψω βάμμα σαρδινικόν,—thus rendered by Dr. Gale,—“Lest I dip you into a Sardinian, *i.e.* a scarlet dye;”—and subsequent writers on the same side have generally adopted this false translation, without challenging its accuracy. A correct version is given by Professor Stuart, in the words,—“Lest I tinge you with a Sardinian hue.” The meaning of the figure, which does not profess to be of a very elevated or refined character, is, according to the explanation of a Scholiast on Aristophanes—“If you do not tell the truth, I will beat you till I make you red with your own blood.” But the demands of an enlightened philology are not satisfied with the attainment of empirical correctness of translation, apart from a knowledge of the structural principle which necessitates the rejection of one sense, and the adoption of another. In opposition to the renderings of Gale and Carson, we contend that the connection of βάψω, in this example,

imperiously forbids the interpreter to understand it in its primary or modal acceptance. The verb, it will be observed, is followed, as Buttmann expresses it, by “the corresponding or kindred abstract substantive,” without an intervening preposition; and such a construction is unintelligible, except upon the principle that the verb and its object correspond in meaning, whether *dip* or *dye* be considered the legitimate representative of that meaning. Thus we can say,—“Lest I dip you a Sardinian dip,” or, “Lest I dye you a Sardinian dye,” or colour; either being perfectly congenial to the syntax, but the latter alone, we submit, conveying the sense. The law which regulates this and multitudes of similar cases, will be more clearly comprehended by citing the rule as it is given in Kühner’s excellent and philosophical Grammar.—“The original and simplest form of the accusative denoting effect, *i. e.* the accusative of the object produced, is when a verb, either transitive, or intransitive, takes the accusative of an abstract substantive, which is either from the same stem as the verb, or has a kindred signification, *e. g.* μάχην μάχεσθαι, to fight a fight, pugnam pugnare.”—p. 388. We are aware of no principle in the Greek language plainer and better established; yet it is violated by the sectarian translation of Gale, which Dr. Carson has unhappily copied.

Let it not be inferred, from the preceding statements and reasonings, that we deem it impracticable to found a figurative use on the primary sense of βάπτω. On the contrary, we hold it would be quite as easy and natural as to establish a similar use in connection with the secondary sense. Our object has been simply to deal



with the realities of the case, marking necessary and important distinctions, and unfolding principles of interpretation, which bear more or less directly on the mode of baptism, and are at the same time designed, and, we trust, calculated to aid in the discovery and defence of truth, along the entire line of biblical investigation.

Before passing to the consideration of βαπτίζω, we may be expected to state briefly our views of the philosophical connection between the primary and secondary acceptations of its acknowledged ancestor. Among philologists it appears to be the prevailing opinion that *dip* forms the original, and *dye* the derived signification of βάπτω. The reverse order, indeed, has occasionally numbered its partizans, but their views, unable to make way in the literary and theological world, have never succeeded in rising above the rank of unfounded though ingenious speculation. We have no quarrel with the commonly received opinion, which we consider to be best sustained by the evidence of history, while it has the advantage of labouring under no antecedent improbability. Nor are we inclined to dispute the common-sense logic, which regards the idea of dyeing as natively arising out of that of dipping, the transition being in itself facile, and in full keeping with the known practice of the dyers, both of ancient and modern times. The process commonly adopted among the ancient Greeks and Romans, we are much disposed, with some authors, to take upon trust; and we should deem it immeasurably safer for Baptist writers to rest this point on the nature of the case, than appeal to the inexcusable mistakes or perversions which Dr. Gale and his followers

have produced in the shape of historical testimonies. The quotation on this subject, which he seems to have considered decisive, and the evidence of which Dr. Carson has rashly pronounced "most complete," is borrowed from *Plato de Republica*, and describes the ancient process of dyeing wool, when the object was to secure fast colours. The crushing charge against Gale's translation is, that it shifts from *dye* to *dip*, and back again to *dye*, not merely unsupported by the authority of any ascertained principle in Greek, or any other language, but in direct contravention of the simple and fundamental laws which regulate the primary and secondary meanings of terms. In connection with this very passage, we have already produced a promising specimen of Gale's accuracy, from Dr. Halley's work on Baptism. That author's attention, however, does not seem to have been directed to the detection and exposure of the master mistake which pervades and vitiates the entire translation. Plato's statement is to the effect, that unless wool be properly selected, and duly prepared to receive the colouring matter, its appearance when dyed will be disagreeable, and the colour will not be retained. The attainment of the desirable object he accordingly makes to depend chiefly on the previous selection and preparation of the material, not on the act of immersion, which is not named, except in Dr. Gale's version. Our conviction, from a careful examination of the original is, that Plato does not utter one syllable about dipping; and that, therefore, Dr. Carson's complete evidence turns out to be no evidence at all. Lest, however, our judgment might have been unconsciously

warped by prepossessions, we opened the respectable translation of Plato's Works, by Sydenham and Taylor, in 5 vols. 4to., where we found our view confirmed by at least unbiassed authority. We extract the passage : " The dyers, when they want to dye their wool, so as to be of a purple colour, out of all the colours they first make choice of the white ; and then, with no trifling apparatus, they prepare and manage it, so as best of all to take on the purest colour, and thus they dye it ; and whatever is tinged in this manner is of an indelible dye ; and no washing, either without or with soap, is able to take away the pure colour : but such wool as is not managed in this manner, you know what sort it proves, whether one is dyeing other colours or this, without the due preparation beforehand."—Vol. I. p. 271. In several points this version is evidently susceptible of great improvement ; but, as regards the direct allusions to the dyer's art, we are ready to stand by its substantial correctness ; and as it proceeds from a quarter against which there is no possible room for the imputation of theological bias, without pretending to superior or critical excellence, it may well be permitted to supersede the prejudiced and unscholar-like attempt of Dr. Gale.

Our great object, however, in adducing the example, was not the demolition or exposure of this author's claims to literary pre-eminence, as a champion on the opposite side ; but the detection and condemnation of a false principle in Hermeneutics. We have referred to his unwarrantable shifting and interchange of the terms *dip* and *dye*, to suit Baptist convenience—to use a common phrase—his playing fast and loose with the

primary and secondary sense of βάπτω, as may be exemplified in the first clause of this citation from Plato.—“The *dyers* (οἱ βαφεῖς) when they are about to *dip* (βάψαι) a quantity of wool,” &c. Now, this shifting from one sense to another, we denounce as not merely unprincipled, but anti-principled. The word translated *dyers*, is, as our German grammarians would express it, of the same stem with the word rendered *dip*; and hence, unless some reason of extraordinary strength or urgency interpose, there must be a correspondence of signification. Let the Greek philosopher and naturalist be fairly represented—let him inform us, if it please Drs. Gale and Carson, of the dippers dipping their wool; or, of the dyers dyeing their wool, which we hold to be the true and obvious meaning; but let him not be made to violate the laws of grammar, and the dictates of common sense. Were it asked, what motive could have impelled Dr. Gale to pass so adroitly from the one meaning to the other, the only answer which appears to be suggested by the facts of the case is, that this procedure promised to reinforce powerfully the argument for immersion, which he was labouring to construct out of ancient Greek testimonies. These ingenious transitions, however, must not be permitted to entrap the unlearned or unthinking; and sound principles must be developed and vindicated, as the surest means of expounding aright the oracles of classic antiquity, and, what is far more momentous, of eliciting from the inspired page the mind of the Spirit of God.

Having recognised the primary and secondary sense of βάπτω, in the order in which they are commonly



arranged, we are not disposed to dwell at any length on what may be called the philosophy of their mutual connection. We cordially acquiesce in the views of Dr. Carson, when he says—"If the word originally denoted to dip, it might, by a natural process, come to signify to *dye*, which was performed by dipping. \* \* \* Upon our view there is a connecting link which joins these two meanings together, notwithstanding their great diversity. They are seen by our doctrine as parent and child." But we feel constrained to demur, when the same author, waxing more confident, subjoins—"If the word originally signified to *pour*, or to *sprinkle*, no process can be supposed by which it would come to denote to *dye*." The question raised by this strong and unqualified assertion, let it be observed, is not one of fact, nor even of probability, but of bare possibility. We are distinctly informed, that "no process can be supposed," by which a verb, primitively denoting to pour or sprinkle, could so far depart from that signification, as to acquire the secondary sense of *dyeing*. Now, we confront this doctrine, by engaging, not only to suppose, but to describe a possible process of transition from the one meaning to the other, without even drawing very extensively on the resources of imagination.

We take for our starting point one of Dr. Carson's examples from Hippocrates :—"When it drops upon the garments (βάπτεται) they are dyed." Now, for our philological hypothesis. Suppose the verb to have been originally applied to this dropping,—or to pouring, or sprinkling,—in such an example as βάπτω χρώμα, it would have denoted, "I pour colouring matter," namely,

upon some object to be dyed. The transition from this to an imagined secondary sense of *dyeing* in any manner, without reference to dropping or pouring, is attended with no greater difficulty than the actual change of βάπτω, from *dip* to *dye*. This forms the second, and might safely stand as the closing, step in our hypothetical transition process. But to proceed a little farther, we shall suppose that, when dyeing attained the importance of a regular art, dipping was adopted as the common, because the most convenient mode : and thus the term passed readily to this latter signification. We have now travelled by what we conceive to be easy stages along the line of supposition from pouring to dyeing, and thence to dipping, without encountering any impassable barrier. These statements, it is almost superfluous to add, we do not present as embodying the facts of the *usus loquendi* of βάπτω, but for the purpose of showing that the alleged incompatibility between *pouring* and *dyeing*, in the order of possible etymology, has, in reality, no foundation, and is opposed to just views of the philosophy of language.

It may be imagined that in the preliminary department of our subject, more time has been devoted, and more critical labour expended than the importance of this branch of the controversy appears to warrant, or, at all events, to demand. In the course pursued, involving, we confess, some awkward and humiliating exposures of more than one author, we have been influenced by several considerations, of which we take leave to state the three following as the principal :—

1. The tone and temper of sundry Baptist writers

appeared to us to call imperiously for sharp animadversion. We are far, indeed, from acknowledging in controversy, especially on sacred subjects, the binding authority of the *lex talionis*—the law of retaliation. To return railing for railing we hold to be not more unchristian in its character, than it is impolitic in its bearing, on the cause which has the misfortune to receive such unhallowed support.

Still it will be admitted, that an author may assume a tone which demands rebuke, display a temper which requires chastening, and put forward pretensions so disproportionate to his literary merits, that truth is concerned in reducing them within the limits of moderation. If a writer is found constantly arrogating to himself superior scholarship, and vast powers of discrimination, and haughtily denouncing as insanity or nonsense, whatever may cross the path of his own favourite dogmas,—if with an air of learned infallibility he characterizes, as uncritical and illiterate, the productions of able and highly educated men, and divines well instructed in the kingdom of God,—does it not become a public duty to turn the lamp upon himself, as he stumbles and falls in the thorny paths of Greek syntax?—does it not become indispensable to guard the churches and the world against the blunders which mix themselves up with the *lettered* and oracular announcement of principles and their applications?

Transatlantic Immersionists, we observe, are improving upon the example of some of their brethren in our own country. On the 28th of April, 1840, the Baptist American and Foreign Bible Society modestly passed the

following resolution :—" Resolved, that the fact that the nations of the earth must now look to the Baptist denomination ALONE, for faithful translations of the word of God, a responsibility is imposed upon them, demanding, for its full discharge, an unwonted degree of union, of devotion, and of strenuous persevering effort throughout the entire body." The *esprit du corps*, which dictated such a resolution, is vastly laudable, and might appropriately adopt as its humble devotional motto—" God I thank thee that I am not as other men are." The sad error, against which this thunder is mainly levelled, consists in the admission of the words *baptism* and *baptize*, instead of *immerse* and *immersion*, into the great majority of translations of the New Testament. Mark the consistency of these men ! They charge us with using *baptism*, as the veil of the original, not its vehicle ; yet they call themselves *Baptists* ! their churches the *Baptist* denomination !! their Bible Society the *Baptist* Bible Society !!! In the name of common sense and consistency, let them purge themselves of this banned term, before they proceed to the purgation of our Bibles. Let them stand before the public as *Dippers*, the *Dipping* denomination, and the *Dipping* Bible Society ; and having thus cast the beam out of their own eye, they will bring a clearer vision to the task of pulling the mote out of a brother's eye. We cannot imagine that the meek framers of the resolution intended a reflection on the learning of Pædobaptist Christian communities. In view of the comparative amount and value of their own contributions, to the cause of Biblical literature in its various departments, including translations



of the Scripture into different languages, it would, we presume, savour more of foolishness than temerity to form so ludicrous an estimate of their own attainments. O, no—they possess too much discretion to place themselves in such an attitude ; and we must, therefore, look for some other explanation of their exclusive fitness to supply the nations of the earth with correct versions of the Word of God. How is it that Baptists ALONE are competent to this stupendous undertaking ? The reason is, that in their own lowly estimation, Baptists, and none but Baptists, are sufficiently honest and conscientious to translate intelligibly those passages of Scripture which relate to the baptismal ordinance. It is not pride of learning, but pride of conscience, that prompts them to announce to the world that all, except themselves, are disqualified for executing *faithful* translations of the Bible. What must be the tendency of such arrogance, European or American, on members of the religious communion, in whose bosom it is nurtured and warmed ? Will it not bite like an adder, and sting like a serpent ? We learn from President Beecher's able defence of Pædobaptist views, in the *Biblical Repository*, that the pious zeal of some of our Transatlantic Dippers constrains them to speak, “ in Christian newspapers, *of scalping their antagonists,*” thus culling their choice flowers of sacred rhetoric from the atrocious and barbaric practices of Indian warfare ! Were we animated by a kindred spirit, we should say, in tones of firm defiance, “ not loud but deep,”—Let them come on. The game of the controversial tomahawk and scalping-knife may be hazardous ; but it is a game at which *two* parties can play.

Our object, however, in the occasional literary exposures we feel it our duty to make, is of a different stamp, and professes to be dictated by a better motive. We would not cherish arrogance in ourselves, while we venture to rebuke its pretensions in others. The haughty assumption which has appeared on the other side, allied, in some instances, with undoubted talent and high attainments, we detect in the commission of such mistakes in translation and criticism, as may teach controversialists generally, a wholesome lesson on the subject of overweening self-confidence. We would quietly remind even the more aspiring of our Baptist friends, that they probably have not secured for themselves a monopoly of all the learning, and logic, and Christianity in the world; but that, like their neighbours in the present scene of comparative ignorance and imperfection, they know only in part, and prophesy only in part. If they are satisfied that, on this or any other point, they have, by the divine blessing, attained the knowledge of Scripture truth, let them by all means maintain their principles boldly, but not boastfully,—with whatever ability God has given them, but not with whatever abuse Satan may tempt them to heap upon their opponents.

2. The investigation and defence of truth universally appear to us to demand that mere names and authorities be placed upon their proper level. We do not here refer to the influence of a name upon the general mass of society, whose interest in public controversy is often in the inverse ratio of their acquaintance with the nature of the subject, or the arguments adduced by the several disputants. For the unthinking multitude it is enough

to learn, that a treatise has appeared for or against some particular view, sanctioned by the reported approval of a known leader—and forthwith its superiority is asserted, and its praise celebrated with all the confidence of an ignorance as complacent as it is profound.

But the evil to which we solicit attention, as loudly calling for an adequate corrective, is of a different stamp, and involves interests which it is the bounden duty of the friends of truth, and of free discussion universally, to guard with sacred vigilance. Far be it from us to trifle with the rights and immunities of a well-earned reputation, or in any department, civil, ecclesiastical, or literary, to refuse honour to whom honour is due ;—but when lofty character in the walks of authorship, instead of merely commending certain views to respectful consideration, is employed for the purpose of rendering farther discussion superfluous or hopeless ;—when writers confidently inform us, that they have settled for ever some question, which may have long agitated the theological world, and when the boast is industriously circulated in the spirit of a warm, though perhaps warrantable partizanship ;—when a name, however great and good, is put forward to lay an arresting hand on the spirit of free inquiry, it becomes a solemn duty to employ all legitimate means for breaking the spell of mere authority, and subordinating the influence of names to the supremacy of truth. It may be objected that the author who uttered the bravado, produced evidence and argument, calculated, in his judgment, to evince its correctness, and invest it with the attributes of a sober inductive proposition. But unhappily for the interests of truth,

while the argument and evidence are allowed to die, the bravado lives to supersede all necessity for reasoning, and to tell coming generations of inquirers, that the question is settled. Thus the tendency of the boast, whether intentional or otherwise, is to paralyze research, by representing her aim as utterly unattainable. Now, we hold it incumbent on every friend of truth to resist this summary mode of determining controversies, on all subjects which fall under discussion, and this course, we maintain, to be especially indispensable in the present crisis of the Baptist controversy. Again and again are we tauntingly informed by our opponents, that the giants of literature have settled the dispute in *their* favour, and the ghosts of these giants are called up as if to put us in bodily fear. What a parade, too, is witnessed, in some of their latest and best treatises on immersion, of the name of Dr. Gale—the *learned Dr. Gale*, the *very learned Dr. Gale*, and Dr. Gale's *triumphant answer to every quibble from Dr. Wall* ;—while, in point of fact, the said Dr. Gale may be safely matched, on the score of false criticisms and humiliating errors in translation, against any learned advocate of infant baptism, living or dead.

We are not, then, to be overawed by names however distinguished, nor to permit authorities, however numerous and weighty, to interpose between us and the thorough and fearless investigation of the subject. Conducted in this spirit, the discussion occupies a prominent place in our regards, and is calculated to realise important results. We may safely take little interest in the mere contest of party—the battle of man against man,—



Paedobaptist against Anti-Paedobaptist ; but in the noble strife of solid facts and sound reasonings, it should be our ambition to come off victorious.

3. Our principal object, in the preceding literary criticisms, was to exemplify, at an early stage, some of those processes which will be found essential to an accurate estimate of the amount and character of the evidence canvassed in our future investigations. That department of the Baptist controversy, which relates to the mode of administering the ordinance, from its very nature, brings us largely into contact with ancient literature, and requires all the appliances of a critical knowledge of language, combined with wakeful attention to the laws and philosophy of evidence. Indeed, the man who would prosecute successfully the path of inquiry which it opens up, must be prepared for the various, as well as vigorous, exercise of his faculties, keeping before him the great salient points of the argument on both sides, and, at the same time, not overlooking those considerations which may be regarded as minute and apparently insignificant. We have no sympathy with the criticism, which uniformly cultivates the companionship of the trifling and the small ; but on the other hand, *that* does not deserve the name of criticism, which is blind to the fact, that on small points great interests are often suspended. How often has some ancient testimony been misunderstood and perverted, in consequence of its interpreters failing to assign to an unimportant term the precise shade of meaning which the author intended. It is comfortable, however, to reflect that in the present day, neither of the parties interested in the

issue of the Baptist controversy, can have the front to complain of the application of learning and critical research. Of these weapons both have shown a disposition to avail themselves, as far as in their power; and, in common consistency, both must feel pledged not to quarrel with the course which has secured their common approbation. Christians must not despise the *value*, any more than “the *day* of small things.” It were as unreasonable in these inquiries to disregard the nicer and more delicate points of criticism, as for the algebraist or astronomer to cast off those quantities which are as nothing in the process, but which make their influence tell palpably upon the final result. The *microscopic* must not be accounted worthless; for though it may possess no intrinsic claim upon the regards of the biblical student, still it merits a degree of consideration, arising out of its intimate bearing on large and important issues. Hence it appeared especially desirable, in the introductory department of our subject, to exemplify some of those more minute processes, which are indispensable to the thorough sifting of the evidence on either side, and to that enlightened estimate of its character, which is essential to a sound conclusion. To every element, whether great or small, concerned in the discussion, we desire, by the divine blessing, to assign the measure of importance to which it is justly entitled; while we anxiously cherish the hope that our humble labours may be instrumental in promoting those habits of discriminating thought and patient research, without which it is impossible to become “mighty in the Scriptures.”

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

### EXAMINATION OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ.

ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ RELATED TO ΒΑΠΤΩ IN ETYMOLOGY.—THE NATURE OF THE RELATION.—DIFFERENCE IN MEANING BETWEEN THE TWO VERBS.—VARIOUS OPINIONS STATED AND EXAMINED.—ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ NOT A *DIMINUTIVE*, NOR *FREQUENTATIVE*, NOR *CAUSATIVE*, NOR *CONTINUATIVE*.—THE *USUS LOQUENDI*, NOT THE FORM OF THE VERB, DETERMINES ITS SENSE.—COMPARATIVE VALUE OF EARLY GREEK LITERATURE IN ASCERTAINING THE MODE OF BAPTISM.—SHADE OF MEANING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MAY DIFFER FROM THAT OF THE CLASSICS.—DR. CARSON'S RULE INFRINGED BY HIMSELF.—TESTIMONY OF THE GREEK FATHERS.—ITS USES AND LIMITS.

THAT the verb βαπτίζω is intimately related to βάπτω, in etymology and in meaning, is universally acknowledged; but the specific nature of the relation, particularly as regards meaning, continues to be warmly contested. This diversity of view, to which general philology is not altogether a stranger, yet shows itself most prominently, as may be anticipated, on the field of the Baptist controversy. That doctrinal or ceremonial predilections have had their influence on the formation of some of the opinions entertained on the subject, will appear as we proceed; but in regard to others, there is evidently no ground for such imputation.

On the mere point of etymology, the common opinion is, that βαπτίζω, whatever be its meaning, is immediately derived from the root βάπτω, by a simple change of termination. Whether Buttmann would accede to this opinion, is doubtful, because, in treating of the formation of verbs generally, including those which end in ίζω, he states that he will “consider *chiefly* those that are derived from nouns, either substantives or adjectives.” There may, of course, be others, of which it was not his design to take particular cognizance, derived not from nouns but from verbs, and to this latter class βαπτίζω *may* belong. The principle of derivation, as laid down by Kühner, is more explicit and decided, and appears, at the same time, irreconcilable with the common opinion. “All derivative verbs,” he states broadly and without exception, “must be considered as denominative, *i. e.* as derivatives from substantives or adjectives; for although the stem-substantive for several verbs of this kind is not in use, yet the analogy of the others requires that the stem of these also should be assumed.” In accordance with the views of this distinguished grammarian, the verb βαπτίζω, which has one of the derivative endings enumerated by him, should be traced immediately to such a stem, for instance, as the verbal βάπτω, and both probably to βάπτω, as their common ancestor. This principle of etymology is perhaps the more correct, and, at all events, is entitled to respectful attention; yet, in the case before us, its adoption does not materially affect even the genealogical relation subsisting between the two verbs.

The meaning of βαπτίζω, as compared with that of its



primitive, demands a somewhat closer and more detailed statement, particularly as the authorities, in support of some of the different views, are both numerous and highly respectable.

I. Certain writers, regarding the termination *ίζω*, as the sign of a *diminutive*, have contended that as the root *βάπτω* confessedly signifies to *dip*, the derivative must denote something *less* than immersion. This species of criticism had its day, and its patrons, some of them men of eminence in the walks of theology. Others, again, looking upon the same termination as *intensive*, have maintained that it must necessarily make some accession to the signification of its primitive. Upon these views, however, it were superfluous to offer any comment, partly because they are purely hypothetical, deriving no support whatever from the *usus loquendi*, and also because they may be said to belong to the history, rather than to the present state, of the Baptist controversy.

II. An opinion which has prevailed much more generally, and has commanded the suffrages of many of the first names in Greek literature, from an early period till the present day, places *βαπτίζω* in the class of *frequentative* verbs, and assigns to it a corresponding sense. Tertullian, it has been argued, manifestly wrote in accordance with this view, as we find him applying the Latin frequentative *mergito* to the ordinance of Christian baptism. In support of the same opinion, may be cited the authority of most of the leading lexicographers, including Stephanus, Scapula, Bretschneider, Passow, Liddell and Scott, with numbers of inferior rank. Had

some of these authors employed their undoubtedly profound and extensive scholarship, in sustaining, by sufficient examples, the sense which they so unhesitatingly attached to this verb, they would have supplied for the interpreter a highly important desideratum. But this essential part of the process they have not even attempted. Why, it may be asked, do we witness such general concurrence in the adoption of a particular meaning, without, at least, an effort to base it upon an induction of appropriate instances? Professor Stuart states that the able lexicographers, to whom reference has been made, appear to have assigned a frequentative sense to the verb, "on the ground of theoretical principles as to the mode of formation." The main principle of formation, which seems to be recognised by such grammarians as Rost and Buttmann is, that a frequentative character belongs to those verbs in ζω, which are derived from other verbs of greater simplicity. This principle, however, is presented under a more qualified and restricted form by Kühner, where he lays down the general rule that—"By the ending in ᾰζω, verbs are formed, which denote the repetition or strengthening of the idea expressed by the simple verb; these," he adds, "are called Frequentative and Intensive verbs, *e. g.* ῥιπτάζω *jacto*, from ῥίπτω *jacio*." This rule, by implication, excludes verbs in ῑζω from the class of frequentatives, and consequently leaves the structural sense of such a term as βαπτίζω still an open question.

But we are of opinion that some other element, in addition to the influence of a law of formation, must have operated upon the minds of lexicographers to

secure such general harmony, in assigning to this verb a frequentative sense. It is worthy of serious inquiry, whether an unauthorized mode of administering baptism, embodied to some extent in the ritual of Christian antiquity, has not practised a singular imposition at once upon the verb βαπτίζω, and upon some of its most accurate interpreters. Our meaning will become patent, by attending to an observation of the celebrated Vossius, in his *Etymologicon*, under the word *Baptismus*.—"Cum autem βάπτω sit *mergo*, βαπτίζω commodè vertamus *mergito*: præsertim, si sermo de Christianorum baptismo, qui trinâ fit immersione." In accordance with this testimony, the practice at one time prevailed pretty extensively in the Christian church, of *thrice* immersing the subject of baptism, in allusion to the *three* persons of the adorable Trinity, or to Christ's resurrection on the *third* day. Now, is it not reasonable to surmise that this practice, the prevalence of which is abundantly attested by ecclesiastical history, exerted some influence on the decisions of lexicography? The remark of Vossius is clearly in favour of the affirmative. It may, indeed, be objected, that for trine immersion itself we are probably indebted to the peculiar form of βαπτίζω; but there is, we submit, a far weightier probability on the side of tracing that rite to the scriptural connection of the doctrine of the Trinity with the baptismal institution.

Whether the origin of the proposed frequentative sense may be discovered in grammar or history, the writers by whom that sense is adopted cannot hope to obtain for it a cordial and intelligent reception, till they

procure for it a solid basis, on an adequate induction of instances. At present, it appears simply in the light of an opinion, entertained, indeed, by Greek scholars of the first eminence, but not referable to any general principle of the language, and, at the same time, unattended by the evidence requisite to establish a particular acceptance.

III. According to Dr. Gale's theory, βάπτω and βαπτίζω are to be regarded as strictly *ισοδύναμοι* of the same power and signification, so that it is perfectly warrantable to argue "promiscuously from both." This theory, which would obviously require for its support an extensive philological investigation, the author grounds not on any peculiarity in these two verbs, but on the alleged general principle that "derivatives in ζω signify the same as their primitives." Having stated the principle, he furnishes in the margin of his work several examples of verbs, which he considers so related in etymology and sense, informing us that there are *infinita alia*; but he makes no attempt to disengage the evidence which these examples may be supposed to contain, or meet such objections as will not fail to suggest themselves to every educated inquirer. The true state of the facts may be briefly unfolded. That there are instances in which the Greek language employs these two endings without any appreciable difference of signification is at once conceded; but it cannot be denied that there are others in which the derivative evinces a wide and striking departure from the sense of its primitive. These are not matters of doubtful disputation: for usage, the arbiter from whom there is no appeal,



has registered, in the several cases, both the coincidence and the diversity. It were superfluous, however, to enter into an elaborate exposure of Dr. Gale's general principle, which will be perceived, as we canvass the examples of βαπτίζω, to be utterly at variance with the actual state of the evidence.

IV. Others have contended for what they call a *continuative* sense of βαπτίζω, as compared with its root; but as this hypothesis, after careful examination, appears to us, like its predecessors, great in promise, and little in performance, and, as we are likely to have future opportunities of testing its pretensions, it may, for the present, be safely dismissed. Indeed our baptismal etymologists of all classes have gained wondrous little by their recondite speculations. Proceeding, for the most part, upon an inadequate or hasty induction of particulars, they have laid no broad foundation, on which to erect the superstructure of a firm general conclusion. Their learned labours, accordingly, betray more of the *a priori* logical spirit of the Schoolmen, than of that slower but more secure method which has immortalized the name of Bacon, and shed the bright effulgence of truth upon the vast and varied discoveries of modern science.

V. The last opinion we shall notice, respecting the connection in sense, between βάπτω and βαπτίζω, is stated and defended by Dr. Carson. "The termination ζω," he observes, "when employed to form a derivative, appears to me to have served some such purpose, as the Hebrew causal form, and to denote the making of the action of the verb to be performed. Mere speculation

is of no value. The most ingenious theory, not confirmed by the use of language, ought to have no authority. \* \* \* But that my observation is just, may be fully verified by examples. There cannot be the least doubt that the Greeks did form derivatives on this plan. Could I produce no other instance, the following, from *Aelian's Varia Historia*, would be sufficient to establish my doctrine. It occurs in the anecdote he relates with respect to the beneficence of Ptolemy Lagides. 'They say that Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, took great delight in enriching his friends. He said that it is better to enrich, than to be rich.'—197. Here, *πλουτέω* is to be rich, and *πλουτίζω*, to make rich." Having adduced *another* example of two verbs, similarly related in formation and meaning, Dr. Carson leaps at once to his general conclusion, as follows:—"Such, then, indubitably, was originally the use of derivatives with this termination, though in many cases they and their primitives may be interchangeable; and although, in some, the distinction cannot at all be traced. In this view *βαπτίζω* would signify originally to make an object dip. The use, then, would be to apply to the dipping of objects too heavy to be sustained by the dipper."—p. 20.

On this statement, which is put forward with all the assurance of truth, or demonstration, we take leave to offer the following strictures:—

1. In common with the theories already brought under review, it rests upon an induction which is wholly inadequate to the support of the author's conclusion. We admit that Dr. Carson has succeeded in pointing out the *causative* relation in two examples, one of them written

some hundreds of years *before* the Christian era, the other more than a century *after*. But surely these are wholly insufficient to establish a fundamental principle of Greek etymology. Is it philosophical to found a comprehensive principle of grammar on a basis so narrow? Is such a proceeding wise, or safe in any department of knowledge?—or rather does it not obviously belong to those hasty generalizations which have often painfully increased and complicated, instead of facilitating, the labour of scientific investigation. Dr. Gale discusses a number of examples in which the derivative ending in ζω indicates no departure from the sense of the primitive, and forthwith he sagely concludes that verbs so related are ἰσοδύναμοι, of the same meaning. Buttmann produces four examples of verbs with this termination, which denote the frequent repetition of the actions expressed by their roots respectively; but that consummate philologist, far from making this the ground-work of a general principle, simply designates the verbs *frequentative*, and assigns them to one of the “more limited classes of derived forms.” On the other hand, Dr. Carson proves, in *two* instances, the existence of the causal relation; and hence he will have it that the original design of the derivative ending in ζω, was indubitably to express the causal form of the act denoted by the primitive verb. The view embraced by the German grammarian may be less imposing, but it is more solid, and more consistent with the facts, by which alone any view can be sustained. The truth is, that if any of these theories will insist upon its claim to appear in a generalized form as a great principle of the Greek language, one or two stubborn examples can speedily

dispose of its lofty pretensions. The different theories, indeed, are self-evidently incompatible with one another, as each of them occupies the entire ground, and professes to account for all the etymologies concerned. Are they all, then, to be condemned as unfounded speculations? By no means. Each is manifestly true to a limited extent, while none has been able to establish its claim to generality, much less to universality. He must be a Sciolist in Greek who does not know that the meanings of derivatives in ζω from other verbs are exceedingly diversified in relation to their primitives, and that no principle has hitherto been developed which can be said to hold out a credible promise of reducing them all to a common standard.

2. Dr. Carson's assertion that βαπτίζω would properly apply to objects "too heavy to be sustained by the dipper," is not borne out by classical usage generally, nor even by his own examples. "Its occurrence in profane writers," he informs us, is comparatively "rare, and it generally applies to objects that are too heavy to be lifted or borne by the dipper." It is easy for any scholar to test the correctness of this statement, by examining the application of the term in a number of instances taken indiscriminately from the classical writers. Let us consider, in their order, the nine examples first adduced by Dr. Carson himself to establish the modal sense of the verb, with a view to ascertain whether the objects to which it is applied are in general too heavy to be sustained by the dipper. These objects are—*soldiers, a hand, land animals, a man, a sinner, things which float in the lake near Agrigentum*, (their bulk and



weight not specified,) *an arrow, a sword, a piece of iron*, (which a smith takes out of the fire, and tempers with water). We are not aware that in these instances the proportion is more unfavourable to Dr. Carson's principle, than would be presented by an inspection of the entire list which his industry has collected from various authors. What, then, is the true state of the case? It cannot be pretended that more than two or three of the objects are too heavy to be sustained by the dipper, while the great majority of them would obviously prove quite tractable in the hands of a man of ordinary strength. Dr. Carson, indeed, candidly admits that βαπτίζω *may* apply to the smallest object; but he also affirms its *general* use to be altogether different,—an affirmation which we hold to be utterly invalidated by the broad facts as they are exhibited on the pages of classical literature. The question is a perfectly simple one, having nothing recondite in its whole compass, but finding a correct solution in the common arithmetic of fact and criticism.

3. The causative relation between βάπτω and βαπτίζω, as traced by Dr. Carson, involves a distinction without a difference. That βάπτω, in almost all the occurrences of its primary meaning, denotes to *dip* in an active transitive sense, no competent judge will think of calling in question. The truth of this statement is powerfully confirmed by our author's own examples. If, then, βαπτίζω is the causative of βάπτω, it must mean, not *to make an object dip*, as he incorrectly states, but *to make a person dip an object*, which is the true causative expression. In the endeavour to support his principle, he

makes a tacit—probably an unconscious—transition from the active to the neuter sense of βάπτω, thus laying open his philology to a fatal objection. In fact, Dr. Carson's causative meaning is nothing more or less than the transitive sense of βάπτω itself, for *to dip an object*, and *to make an object dip*, are manifestly expressive of one and the same process. The exposure of this want of critical acumen by Dr. Halley is able and triumphant. "Dr. Carson," he observes, "attempts to sustain his shadow of a distinction by shifting the sense of the word: βάπτω is to dip, the transitive verb, to put a thing into the water, and not the neuter verb, to dip or go into the water. In the causative, the sense is shifted from the transitive into the neuter, as when he says, the causative 'is applied to ships, which are made to dip.' This *dip* of the ships is not βάπτω, the transitive, but the neuter into which it has shifted."—p. 464. Dr. Carson's powers of discrimination, we apprehend, must have been strangely in abeyance when he hazarded a distinction so evidently groundless. On a comprehensive view of the entire case, we think it will be admitted that the Greek language affords no warrant for generalizing the causative relation between derivative verbs in ζω and their primitives, and in the particular instance of βάπτω and βαπτίζω, that Dr. Carson has entirely failed in his attempt to establish its existence, or exemplify its application. Other machinery, at least, must be brought into operation, before the ζω of the Greeks can be identified with the *Hiphil* of the Hebrews.

The principles of etymology having thus betrayed their total inability to cast any steady or clear light on

the meaning of βαπτίζω, we are compelled to have recourse to the *usus loquendi*, the supreme court of appeal, by whose decision every proposed interpretation must ultimately stand or fall. In ascertaining the sense of a term in any language, mere derivation is not of the nature of evidence. The actual occurrences of the term in works of standard merit, if such exist, must be carefully examined, that we may discover the different shades of meaning in various connexions of subject and syntax; and, when necessary, mark any figurative or tropical applications. In this interesting branch of the inquiry, much has been already accomplished by the combined efforts of a great number of authors, who, in the prosecution of their several objects and interests, have largely contributed to the materials which are requisite for forming a sound and enlightened judgment respecting the mode of the baptismal ordinance. Still there appear to us to exist certain leading facts or principles which ought to be kept in view in dealing with the evidence, and on which controversialists have not hitherto bestowed an amount of consideration commensurate with their value and importance. To the more prominent of these we would now, therefore, briefly solicit attention.

1. The meaning of βαπτίζω, or of any other word, in the very early literature of Greece, must be regarded as of subordinate moment in determining its New Testament usage. The principle involved in this statement secures the cordial acquiescence of all interpreters, who cannot, indeed, hesitate respecting its correctness in ascertaining the sense of the Greek Scriptures generally;

while its application to the case before us finds a sure warrant in the acknowledged liability of language to change, and in the fact of numerous recorded instances of actual alteration. It would be considered on all hands preposterously unsound in sacred hermeneutics, to argue that a word must be understood in a particular sense in the Epistles of Paul, simply because that had been proved to be its accredited meaning in the writings of Homer or Hesiod. In any comprehensive and well arranged Greek Lexicon, do we not encounter repeated examples of a marked difference between the later and more ancient significations of terms, thus holding out a strong practical admonition against reasoning indiscriminately from the one to the other? And the value of this lesson is peculiarly enhanced by the fact, that the parties inculcating it are not merely competent instructors, but cannot possibly fall under the imputation of sinister design. Their pages exhibit a great principle in the natural history of language; but for the bearing of that principle on the interests of doctrine and denomination, they are neither concerned, nor accountable.

We cannot be suspected of putting forward this view for the purpose of creating a prejudice in favour of, or against any particular meaning of βαπτίζω; for we are not aware that there is any very important difference between the earlier and later testimonies upon the subject. The principle is a general one, claiming extensive control in the region of interpretation, and we are bound faithfully to carry it through, whether the result may be prejudicial or advantageous to the teachings of any party. Were the Iliad to supply an occurrence of this



verb, to which the Pædobaptist might confidently appeal as a proof-passage for sprinkling, or affusion, we should consider it extremely hazardous, in the absence of corresponding evidence derived from Hellenistic Greek, to build upon such a testimony. Nay, on this supposition, it might be fearlessly contended, that we should have no authority whatever for imposing that sense on the term as it occurs in the apostolic commission, unless in the extreme case of its having disappeared from the Greek language altogether, during the intermediate period. These remarks will readily suggest the correct view. The diction of Evangelists and Apostles, every man who reflects clearly on the facts of the case, will expect to present the closest affinities in character and meaning with Hellenistic Greek, or more generally, with the Greek of the first half century of the Christian era.

2. The verb βαπτίζω has not necessarily the same specific meaning in the Hellenistic Greek of profane authors, and in the language of the New Testament. In this position also, a principle of some moment is found to be involved. Though the later Greek, in its general features, including both the forms and significations of words, approaches most nearly to the original of the Christian Scriptures, yet it would be neither safe nor logical to proceed upon the assumption of their absolute identity. We have already seen that the established meaning of δᾶπνον as it occurs even in the profane writings of the Hellenistic period, must be considerably modified, when it is employed to denote the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper;—and almost all the churches of Christendom, amid their mutual divisions

and strifes, concur in recognising the modification. We do not assert the existence of a similar necessity in the case of baptism. Our principle simply goes to affirm, that when adopted by the inspired penmen, the term *may have undergone* a change of meaning, which can be ascertained only from the New Testament itself. The new views of which the Christian Scriptures formed the chosen vehicle, necessitated modification in the sense of a great variety of terms; and baptism possibly may be one of the number. On this point, we refuse to submit to the unreasonably stringent regulation which Dr. Carson toils to enforce *in theory*. In explanation of what he believes to be the legitimate evidence for determining the signification of βαπτίζω, he says, "I give my opponents the whole range of Greek literature, till the institution of the ordinance of baptism." In another passage, referring to his own practice, he thus propounds the same limitation;—"I begin with the classics; I end only with the hour of the institution of the ordinance." Might he not, with safety to his principle, have so stretched his chronology as to include the period of *recording* the apostolic commission, thus generously affording us the benefit of whatever evidence could be collected from a number of additional years? Perhaps we have the power to extort this boon, as an opponent would find it no easy task to prove that baptism was instituted in Greek, and not in Syro-Chaldee.

Apart from this, however, we entertain a strong objection to the principle which avowedly casts overboard the authority of New Testament usage in settling the meaning of a New Testament word. We are

called upon, forsooth, to regard the vocable βαπτίζω as having attained, at the hour of the institution, the state of a stiffened swathed mummy, to be deposited in the catacombs of the Greek Scriptures. But we cannot receive such doctrine. It is repugnant to our deepest convictions. We contemplate this verb at the period stated, as a member of living active society, staid, it may be, in its character, but not immutable,—not “a reed shaken with the wind,” yet in some degree exposed to the fluctuations of its tribe. Let the interpretation of Λόγος in the writings of John be subjected to the law of exclusion which Dr. Carson insists upon applying to βαπτίζω,—let the entire range of Greek literature, till the moment of employing this term as a designation of the Messiah, be freely thrown open to the expositor; and has he not just reason to complain, that by a principle of arbitrary and unwarrantable restriction, he has been deprived of that part of the evidence which is most essential to a sound interpretation? Let us try what would be the manifest result of generalizing this exclusive principle. Every word occurring in the New Testament must have its meaning proved by evidence derived solely from the previous state of the language, and no meaning can claim to be admitted which has not succeeded in passing this severe ordeal. Would not such a procedure issue in a much closer correspondence than actually exists, between the significations of terms as they are used in the ancient classics, and as we meet them in the pages of the Greek Scriptures? It will scarcely be denied that the New Testament employs terms which were familiar to the historians and philo-

sophers of Greece, to convey thoughts which never “entered into the heart” of uninspired sage. This, indeed, forms one of the conditions indispensable to the defence of Christianity as a REVELATION from God,—and its denial would involve the inference, that, with the exception of the meaning of a few peculiar words, whatever is contained in the New Testament must be found within the compass of preceding Greek literature. We hold universally that at no period in the history of a *term*, is its *meaning* exempted from the law of change; consequently, that at the commencement of the Christian economy, there was nothing to prevent, but, from the nature of the circumstances, much to impose a modified acceptation of terms as they were transplanted from the field of the Greek world into the vineyard of the Christian revelation. For the principle we zealously contend;—its application in any alleged instance can be sustained only by the evidence of New Testament usage. On this topic, in its general importance, and particularly as it relates to the legitimate sources of testimony respecting the mode of baptism, Dr. Halley has some clear and forcible observations. “To require,” says he, “the evidence of the usage from previous writers, or from writers who knew not the religious institute, appears to us as unreasonable, as to refuse to hear any exposition of the Greek words of which the terms law, justification, sanctification, resurrection, spirit, angel, and many others, are the representatives, unless it be in accordance with the ideas which pagan poets and philosophers attached to them. Such an exposition, if carried to its full extent, would convert Christianity into



paganism. Am I to attach to *the Son of God*, only the same idea as did the pagan centurion at the foot of the cross ?"—p. 471.

But Dr. Carson has asserted it to be his own practice, in tracing the evidence for *mode*, to begin with the classics, and end with the hour of the institution of baptism. With this assertion under our eye, it may be considered superfluous or insulting, to inquire whether he has religiously observed the conditions emphatically imposed upon himself, in common with his opponents. Let us, however, take a chronological glance at the authorities which he has produced, in support of his view of the meaning of βαπτίζω; and, perhaps, the result will illustrate the wisdom of the Scripture injunction, "Prove all things." The testimonies examined by him for the purpose specified, amount to *fourteen*, of which, startling as must be the announcement, no fewer than *seven* lie beyond the prescribed boundary! These seven we shall enumerate, in the order in which their evidence is canvassed by Dr. Carson, furnishing, at the same time, a correct statement of the periods to which they respectively belong. Plutarch flourished about the year of our Lord 110; Lucian, 160; Porphyry, 290; Themistius, 353; Heliodorus, 390; Josephus, 70; and Dion, 194. We have purposely omitted from this enumeration *Æsop's Fables*, as an authority so chronologically uncertain, that a dissertation would be required to determine the precise age to which it is to be ascribed.

Mark now the consistency of Dr. Carson's professions with his practice! He professes, in citing his testimo-

nies, to close with the hour of the baptismal institution; yet we detect him, when engaged in the actual production of his evidence, wandering two hundred, three hundred, nearly four hundred years beyond the landmark which his own hand had deliberately planted. But while we justly expose the inconsistency of the author's proceeding, we have no objection to recognise the testimony of these later witnesses, believing it to be, upon a principle which shall be presently stated, not only admissible in the circumstances, but highly important in its bearing on the final issue. We refer to the subject, in the meantime, as more than confirmatory of our position, that the New Testament writers have a claim to be heard in evidence of the sense of βαπτίζω in the commission, inasmuch as there surely exists an equally valid reason for receiving the witness of Paul and John, as of Porphyry and Heliodorus.

3. The testimony of the fathers, and of the later writers generally, to the meaning of βαπτίζω, we hold to be exceedingly valuable. We have had frequent occasion to notice the interesting fact, that no man appears to despise patristic testimony, when it proves favourable to the cause, in the advocacy of which he is embarked. If an author commence some learned chapter with sage cautions and warnings, against being led away by the authority of the fathers, the reader may, without the aid of "visions," predict that the sentiments thus introduced do not bask in the sunshine of Christian antiquity. On the other hand, we are free to acknowledge, that the value of this venerable testimony may be unduly exaggerated. We cannot perceive, however,

that there exists any insuperable obstacle in the way of reviewing, without partiality or prejudice, whatever testimonies are found in the fathers, relating to the mode of Christian baptism. Dr. Carson roundly assures us that, "without exception, they use the word [baptism] always for immersion;" and he professes the utmost readiness to receive "their testimony as it regards the meaning of the word at the time of the institution, or commencement of the rite." If the former part of the statement be founded, the more thoroughly patristic evidence is sifted, the greater will be the accession of support to the views of the Immersionist. It cannot, therefore, be supposed that he will attempt to seal a fountain, from which may issue streams for the refreshing of his own section of the Christian Church. With regard to the nature of evidence from the fathers, to the sense of βαπτίζω, at the time of the institution, we have only to express our regret, that the author should even seem to couple the professed admission with the practical exclusion of their testimony. No father could be a competent witness on the subject in question, unless he had lived and written before the close of Christ's ministry on earth; and as this condition does not obtain, in the case of any of the fathers, their evidence must be disposed of by a wholesale rejection. Will it be affirmed that a patristic comment on the institution may recognise immersion, as the mode of the ordinance at that period, and thus present evidence in favour of the doctrine of our opponents? But who does not see that this is no evidence at all? It conveys the judgment formed by an interpreter in a later age,

but can neither exemplify nor attest the usage prevalent, when Christ delivered, or the Evangelists recorded, the Apostolic Commission.

The high value, in our own view, attaching to patristic testimony, may be explained and defended in two observations:—

(1.) Acquaintance with the Greek fathers enables the student of Scripture to understand and appreciate more fully the style, diction, and matter of the New Testament. It is no small advantage to the sacred expositor to be familiar with that phase of the Greek language, which is presented to him in the writings of Evangelists and Apostles. But this advantage is largely accessible in the fruits of patristic erudition. In the works of the fathers, we are encompassed by Christian thoughts and feelings, we breathe a Christian atmosphere, we are presented with Greek itself, to some extent, in Christian costume. We do not question, nay we affirm, the immense utility of a comprehensive knowledge of classical Greek to the Christian interpreter. But we also contend for the great value of such works as those of Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Chrysostom, as a supplementary agency, well calculated to clear away obscurities, and to give to our conceptions of the sense of the original more freshness and life. The adept in patristic literature will feel increasingly happy, and at home in the New Testament. “Shadows, clouds, and darkness,” will gradually melt away, leaving the sky of his hermeneutics brighter and more beautiful. Some may decry this as a very general sort of benefit, less definite than could be desired; still it will not be under-



rated by any who are in the habit of studying the word of God in the light of patristic antiquity.

(2.) When the fathers refer *indirectly* to the sense of βαπτίζω, we consider their testimony to be peculiarly worthy of acceptance. We deny that classical usage binds this verb to mode, and our view we shall endeavour to sustain by detailed evidence. On this point we maintain, moreover, the existence of perfect harmony between the testimony of the classics, and the testimony of the fathers. With respect to the value of the latter, in this instance, we have been led to entertain strong views. That baptism, in the ancient church, was generally administered by immersion, frequently by trine immersion, with some additional ceremonies, rests upon the uniform and consistent testimony of ecclesiastical writers. With this mode the fathers were necessarily familiar, and the fact of its prevalence must have exerted some influence on their interpretation of βαπτίζω. If, then, subsequently to the Apostolic Commission, the meaning of the term underwent any change, the circumstances of the church of the early centuries must have given to that change a direction more decidedly and exclusively *modal*. The *immersion* of patristic baptism, as a Christian ordinance, must have had a powerful tendency to identify baptism in all its occurrences with “dip, and nothing but dip.” Now, if we find the fathers, in defiance of this strong ecclesiastical bias, employing the term, when it does not denote the Christian ordinance, with greater latitude of signification,—if they call by the name of baptisms, applications of water from which immersion is plainly excluded, we

are disposed to attach the highest value to that part of their testimony. But this is no mere hypothesis. There does exist a discrepancy between patristic practice in the administration of baptism, and patristic usage of the term baptism, as applicable to ablutions in general. How are we to account for this discrepancy? Clearly on this principle, that, though in its ecclesiastical use, chained to one mode by the common practice of the church, the term baptism asserted its freedom in the Greek language at large. The liberty which it comparatively lost in the ordinance was, as we shall show, retained and used in various other applications.

Some may propose to reverse this order, taking the immersion of the ordinance as the true and only meaning, and what we have styled *the freedom of the term*, as a departure from the standard. But this could not have been the view of the fathers; else they would never have employed baptism in any other sense than that of immersion. It is evident also, that had not the verb originally denoted the application of water in diverse ways, the immersion of the ordinance would have speedily brought all its occurrences within the limits of modal exclusiveness. Still it may be asked, how came the ordinance to be so restricted, if the term baptism rejoiced in a wider latitude of signification? We reply generally, it is as common to stereotype the *mode* of an *ordinance*, as it is uncommon to stereotype the *meaning* of a *word*. That the Scriptures do not enjoin immersion we expect to prove; and that immersion may have originated, in common with *trine* immersion, in misconception of the divine requirement, is

easily supposable. In all ages, the spirit of will-worship, the universal concomitant of human nature, has busied itself in rendering more operose and cumbersome the simple rites of our holy faith. When Christ proposes to wash the feet, this spirit is sure to exclaim, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Antiquity does not supply materials for tracing historically the early rise and progress of immersion. Nor is this course necessary to our object. If the Scriptures, instead of enjoining immersion, leave the mode of the ordinance free and unfettered, we are justified in maintaining our Christian liberty, whatever the practice of the fathers may say to the contrary. At the same time, the patristic application of *baptism*, to ablutions in general, without regard to mode, affords evidence, in our judgment, equally decisive and disinterested, in favour of the greater latitude of meaning, which we are prepared to ascribe to βαπτίζω.

Having thus sketched, chronologically, the boundaries of the evidence to be produced, and referred, in general terms, to the character by which it must be distinguished, and to some of the principles recognised in judging of its admissibility and force, we are prepared to enter upon the examination of classical testimonies, bearing more directly on the mode of baptism.

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE GREEK CLASSICS.

MEANING OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ.—GENERAL STATEMENT SUSTAINED BY THE VIEW OF DR. GALE.—INSTANCES FROM PLATO EXPLAINED IN AST'S LEXICON PLATONICUM.—INTERESTING EXAMPLE FROM ARISTOTLE FULLY CANVASSED.—TESTIMONY OF HIPPOCRATES—OF DIODORUS SICULUS.—ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ IN CONSTRUCTION WITH ΕΙΣ CONSIDERED.—DR. CARSON'S EXAMPLES FROM HIPPOCRATES, JOSEPHUS, PLUTARCH, AND HELIODORUS, DISCUSSED.—CLOSING REMARKS ON THIS CONSTRUCTION.—ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ WITH THE DATIVE:—INSTANCES—FROM HERACLIDES PONTICUS—FROM THE LIFE OF HOMER ASCRIBED TO DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS.—MISCELLANEOUS EXAMPLES—SYBILLINE VERSE CITED BY PLUTARCH.—ITS IMPORTANCE DEVELOPED.—DISTINCTION BETWEEN ΒΑΠΤΩ AND ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ EVINCED BY DR. CARSON'S OWN RENDERINGS.—INSTANCES FROM POLYBIUS AND STRABO.—SUMMARY VIEW OF CLASSICAL EVIDENCE.

Our general statement is, that the verb βαπτίζω, unlike βάπτω in its primary sense, is not tied to any exclusive mode, but embraces a wider range, and admits of greater latitude of signification. Let the baptizing element encompass its object, and in the case of liquids, whether this relative state has been produced by immersion, affusion, overwhelming, or in any other mode, Greek usage recognises it as a valid baptism. Thus, the sea-coast is baptized when the tide flows over it, cattle are baptized when the rush of an "overflowing



flood" comes upon them and drowns them, and the altar built by Elijah was *baptized*, when his attendants poured upon it the required quantity of water. Sometimes the action of the verb applies to the whole, sometimes to a part of the baptized object; this information, however, is not conveyed by the term itself, but must be learned from the context, and generally from the surrounding circumstances. In attaching to the verb this generic sense, we take our stand upon the solid foundation of the usage of the Greek language through all periods concerned, including the Classical, the Biblical, and the Patristic.

The view of βαπτίζω now presented, is not confined to writers who advocate the administration of the ordinance, by sprinkling or affusion. It claims the support of respectable Baptist authority. Among others, Dr. Gale, probably the most learned author on that side of the question, felt constrained to attach to the verb a sense which any Pædobaptist might safely adopt almost without modification. "The word βαπτίζω," he observes, "perhaps *does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water*, as in general a thing's being in that condition, *no matter how it comes so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it*; though, indeed, to put into the water is the most natural way and the most common, and is, therefore, usually and pretty constantly, but it may be not necessarily implied."—*Reflections*, p. 122. These words contained an instructive lesson to succeeding immersionists. Dr. Gale "rowed hard" to bring *modal exclusiveness* safe to land, but finding it a troublesome passenger, amid the storm of theological

controversy, he adopted the more prudent course of throwing it overboard. With him the verb does not signify “dip, and nothing but dip:”—on the contrary, it may be used without even necessarily *implying* immersion. The careful reader will observe, that in explaining the word, Dr. Gale has in view those cases by far the most numerous, in which it is constructed with nouns denoting fluid substances; but there is no difficulty in generalizing the definition, so as to make it co-extensive with the actual usage of βαπτίζω.

A word respecting Dr. Carson’s view of this verb, before proceeding to adduce evidence from the Classics. Whatever may become of the *mode* of Christian baptism, the philologist will perceive at a glance that one solitary example *may* annihilate Carson’s entire theory. According to him, βαπτίζω, in all its occurrences, denotes *to dip*, from which meaning it never, in the slightest degree, departs. In the Classics it denotes *to dip*, in the Scriptures it denotes *to dip*, and in the Fathers it denotes nothing but *to dip*. A solitary instance, therefore, of a different usage, from any quarter, is sufficient to explode the whole theory, and necessitate the reconstruction of the meaning of the verb, on some other principle to be furnished by the philosophy of language. It will be our business, in the sequel, to show, from a variety of instances, that the *modal* restriction, so strenuously advocated by Carson, is utterly visionary and untenable.

We commence our examples with Plato, in whose writings, according to the highest modern authority, βαπτίζω is not to be found in the sense of immersion.

It is affirmed by Dr. Carson, that there exists among Greek lexicographers the most complete harmony in representing *dip* as the primary meaning of βάπτω and βαπτίζω; but we shall be under the necessity of introducing some discordant notes into this fancied harmony. In the *Lexicon Platonicum* of Ast, on which he expended the literary labour of a lifetime, the primary sense of βάπτω, in the writings of the Grecian philosopher, is expressed by *immergo* to *dip*, to *immerse*,—that of βαπτίζω, by *obruo*, *opprimo*, to *overwhelm*, to *oppress*, having no reference whatever to the action of dipping. The instances cited by Ast are confessedly figurative, but this does not materially affect the character of the testimony they furnish, as will appear when we come to discuss tropical occurrences of the verb. At present we merely adduce the following example,—Euthyd. 277, D. Ἐγὼ γνοῦς βαπτιζόμενον τὸ μαιμάκιον,—“ I knowing the little boy *overwhelmed*,” namely, with questions. This translation, which is also adopted by Liddell and Scott, is at least entitled to respect, as exhibiting the calm dispassionate judgment of a Greek scholar, who had no sinister purpose to serve, and whose authority has reached standard eminence in expounding the works of Plato.

Our next example will require closer inspection. It is taken from Aristotle *de Mirabilibus*, and the meaning has been severely, as well as learnedly contested.—“They say that the Phoenicians, who inhabit the parts called Gadeira (Cadiz), sailing beyond the pillars of Hercules, with an east wind, reached, in four days, certain uninhabited coasts, places full of sea-weed, which

were not laid under water (*μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι*) at ebb; but at full tide were deluged (*κατακλύζεσθαι*). Dr. Carson adopts the rendering here given of the disputed verb, and is aware of the impossibility of literal immersion in the case; yet still he contends for the exclusively modal sense. On what principle, then, is his argument based? Avowedly not on the ascertained facts in the history, which are physically irreconcilable with the idea of immersion. The coasts at which the Phœnician mariners arrived, were not literally dipped in the ocean-tide, but the ocean-tide was literally brought over these coasts; and hence the immersionist, in defending his peculiar views, is compelled to have recourse to a figurative interpretation. "Though the water," says Dr. Carson, "comes over the land, and there is no actual exemplification of the mode expressed by this word, yet it still expresses that mode; and the word has been employed for the very purpose of expressing it. The peculiar beauty of the expression consists in figuring the object, which is successively bare and buried under water, as being dipped when it is covered, and as emerging when it is bare."—p. 21. The example appears to have proved rather refractory in this writer's hands; and though, on more than one occasion, he repelled a similar charge with warm and honest indignation, we are unable, in this instance, to acquit him of the charge of determining the sense of a contested word, on the ground of pure assumption. If *βαπτίζω* denote only to *dip*, and if Dr. Carson had previously established that point by sufficient evidence, some foundation would have been laid, or at least some necessity evinced, for



introducing figure into the exposition of the passage. But let it be noted, that this forms his very first instance, planted at the threshold of the investigation,—and thus his procedure is evidently chargeable with bending the sense of βαπτίζω to a philological dogma—a foregone conclusion—of the correctness of which at that stage he had not furnished one particle of proof. It is surely time enough to ground a figurative application on the literal sense, after the literal sense has been fairly established by an adequate and satisfactory process of induction.

In the present instance, however, the retreat upon figurative interpretation will be found otherwise liable to grave exception. The passage is neither poetry, nor pure oratory, but plain prose narrative, containing an accurate description of what the writer naturally regarded as a striking physical phenomenon. Unless, therefore, some cogent reason constrain us to have recourse to figure, we are bound to hold by the literal meaning; and that such reason has no existence, we have as decisive evidence as the nature of the case can admit. When language is to be understood figuratively, every one thoroughly acquainted with it will instantly recognise the necessity, and feel the beauty of the tropical acceptance. This forms, in the opinion of our most philosophical grammarians, one of the surest criteria of figure, as distinguished from the proper signification of a term. It requires no refining ingenuity, they inform us, no hair-splitting controversial acumen to detect the presence of figures of speech. They are not traced in the dim characters of a faded palimpsest, but in letters which

“ he who runneth may read ; ” — they are not precious stones, concealed in the bowels of the earth, but gems sparkling on the surface. An attempt may perhaps be made to overturn this reasoning, by alleging that the figurative application of βαπτίζεσθαι, in this passage, would be promptly observed and appreciated, were not our minds prejudiced by obstinate attachment to a particular system. But, as our triumphant reply, let the reader be reminded that Baptist writers in general have been as blind to the existence of figure, in this occurrence of the verb, as the staunchest of their opponents. Drs. Gale and Cox no more call in question the literal interpretation, than Professor Stuart and Dr. Halley : nor is it easy to discover on what ground any one would think of a different exposition of the language, except under the pressure of formidable and perplexing difficulties.

There is another point which makes strongly against a figurative meaning. Dr. Carson speaks of the “ peculiar beauty ” of representing the sea-coast, “ as being dipped when it is covered, and as emerging when it is bare.” But it is to his own creative genius, and not to the description by Aristotle, that we are indebted for this rare specimen of the beautiful. The terms in the original, which are opposed to each other, are μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι and κατακλύζεσθαι, from which, by no fair exposition, can we gather the contrasted ideas of *being dipped*, and *emerging*. If the former denote *not dipped*, still the latter must be rendered *deluged* or *overwhelmed* ; and thus, instead of presenting to the imagination a pleasing and consistent figure, Aristotle would be

chargeable with forming a very clumsy and unnatural connection between the proper sense of one term, and the figurative acceptance of another. The parties, as Dr. Carson brings them before us, are so ill-assorted, and give such faint promise of a happy and harmonious union, that we are under the painful necessity of forbidding the banns.

Our view of this testimony, in its character and import, receives powerful confirmation from the following lucid statement of the case by Dr. Halley.—“When Aristotle says that the land at low water was not baptized, what else could he mean than that it was not covered with the water? In this baptism the water must have gone upon the rushes and sea-weeds, for he never could have dreamed of their going into the water. A more perfect and unexceptionable example cannot be desired. It does not depend upon the variable customs of that age, or upon historical events, of which inaccurate accounts may have reached us. If we know the customs of the ocean, the immutable laws of the tidal wave, we are as competent to judge of the meaning of βαπτίζω, in this instance, as were the Athenians themselves. Aristotle, the faithful teacher of nature, had to relate an extraordinary fact; and we may be sure he would have been scrupulously exact in the selection of his words, in order to make the description as truthful as possible.”—p. 357. The word *dip*, in this instance, has clearly no place in the obvious common-sense meaning of the passage, and is only *forced* from the words, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, in support of a favourite theory.

In reference to the preceding examples from Plato and Aristotle, it is worthy of remark, that βαπτίζω is almost uniformly employed throughout Greek literature, where the usage of the language would forbid the substitution of βάπτω. The nature of the difference, which is not unimportant to the interests of the present discussion, will appear more distinctly, in the examination of some of our succeeding testimonies.

The next author, to whose writings we would solicit attention, is Hippocrates, the Greek physician, and father of medicine, who flourished 430 years before Christ. In his therapeutical prescriptions he has frequent occasion to refer to the dipping of different substances, and the term he almost invariably employs, to denote this operation, is βάπτω. Of fifty occurrences of βαπτίζω, cited from different authors by Mr. John H. Godwin, in his interesting work on *Christian Baptism*, “there are,” he observes, “only three where the construction is that required by the sense of dipping.” Whether this conclusion be founded, or otherwise, it is instructive to mark, in the writings of Hippocrates, the appropriation of βάπτω, in nearly all instances, to the act of dipping. The solitary exception, as regards both the term and its construction, recognised by Dr. Halley, and quoted by Dr. Carson, is from the treatise *De Morbis Mulierum*, I. p. 620, Edit. Genev. 1657.—Καὶ βαπτίζειν πάλιν ἐς γάλα γυναικὸς, καὶ μύρον αἰγύπτιον,—“And dip it again (referring to a blister) in breast-milk, and Egyptian ointment.” The former dipping was expressed by one of the tenses of βάπτω, in common with all similar cases found in this writer—a circum-



stance calculated to excite suspicion that the text has been here corrupted. We do not assert this to be the fact; but for the reason already assigned, and especially because some of the most distinguished Greek scholars of the present day have publicly expressed their conviction of the necessity of a good critical revision of Hippocrates, "to make his text of authority in elucidating the Ionic dialect," we consider it, in the meantime, worse than useless to employ conjectural or expository speculation on a reading which, in the end, may turn out to be spurious. Should the disputed term retain its place in a castigated edition of the text of this author, then will be the time for showing, as can be easily done, that the sense is perfectly reconcilable with our general doctrine respecting the meaning of βαπτίζω.

Another example from Hippocrates relates to the baptism of a ship at sea, by overloading it; but as instances, presenting features of a similar character, abound in Hellenistic Greek, and particularly in the writings of Josephus, we may conveniently postpone its consideration.

The same author furnishes two additional occurrences of βαπτίζω, which, in consequence of their exact mutual correspondence, may be treated as one and the same. In the Basil Edit. p. 340, he says,—Καὶ ἀνέπνει ὅιον ἐκ τοῦ βεβαπτίσθαι ἀναπνεύουσι,—"And he breathed as persons breathe after being baptized." Dr. Carson disposes of the evidence of this passage in a manner more summary than satisfactory.—"Surely unbelief," says he, "must be obstinate, if this does not remove it. The breathing of persons under the disease referred to is like

the breathing of a person after baptism. Can any thing, then, be more obvious, than that *baptism is an immersion* in water, even an immersion over head, so as to stop the breath till it is over?"—This forms the whole of the author's comment, to which we are solicitous to draw attention, as betraying an unhappy tendency to convert a strictly neutral party into an ally, and as based upon an erroneous principle of dealing with evidence. Let it be observed that Dr. Carson adduces this example in the series of positive proofs of the meaning of the verb, and not in illustration of a point supposed to be already established. Now, when Hippocrates speaks of a peculiar breathing after baptism, what evidence have we of mode, which does not proceed upon the transparent and undisguised assumption that baptism is identical with immersion? Would not the breathing be equally affected, whether the baptized party were put into the water, or overwhelmed by the water poured upon him? We can bear personal testimony to the fact, that the breathing is as powerfully affected by a copious shower-bath, as by a plunge into the deep blue sea; while it is obvious to common-sense, that a person, for a short time, covered with water, in any mode whatever, will fulfil all the conditions of the example referred to by Hippocrates. Instead, therefore, of finding here evidence so strong, that nothing but obstinate unbelief is capable of resisting its force, we are unable to discover one particle of independent proof, or even any circumstance necessarily implying the modal meaning for which Dr. Carson so dogmatically contends. We are equally at a loss to detect, in the language of "the old physician," any

support for the “continued submersion,” advocated by Mr. Godwin, as requisite to occasion the given peculiarity of breathing. Verily, the *continuance* must be brief, else the quality of the breathing will cease to be a subject of remark. These authors, though opposed to each other in both branches of the controversy, appear to me, in the present instance, to be unconsciously influenced in their respective reasonings by a previous hypothesis, to which the meaning of the term must be conformed. Mr. Godwin argues for the “continuative” sense of βαπτίζω, Dr. Carson maintains, that *in all cases* it denotes only to dip; and, accordingly, each has no difficulty in extracting support for his favourite sense, out of this example of Hippocrates. The remarks of Dr. Halley appear to be more in accordance with the realities of the case, while they concede to his opponents all that can be fairly demanded.—“In two instances he (Hippocrates) speaks of a peculiar breathing, as of persons ‘after being baptized,’ which is applicable to persons having been under water, whether dipped or overflowed, and so they teach nothing concerning mode; or rather, being used where no intention of expressing mode appears, they confirm our opinion.” It is certainly a fact, worthy of the deepest attention, as this author very properly intimates, that the father of medicine has employed βάπτω about one hundred and fifty times, to denote the modal *dip*, and its derivative βαπτίζω, for the same specific purpose only once, if indeed that one occurrence belongs to the genuine text. This usage, which no philosopher at least will attribute to accident, clearly warrants the important conclusion, that the

Greek of that early period, instead of regarding the two verbs as commonly synonymous, and therefore interchangeable, maintained a great practical distinction between them, which has too often eluded the notice of zealous controversialists.

Before discussing the evidence furnished by the various constructions of βαπτίζω, we shall adduce another instance of its use from which the notion of dipping appears to be essentially excluded. Diodorus Siculus, Lib. I. Tom. i. p. 417, Edit. Amstd. says,—“The greater number of the land animals overtaken by the river perish, (βαπτίζόμενα) being baptized.” This example is in many respects analogous to the one previously quoted from Aristotle, and its great value will be rendered apparent by a simple statement of the facts which enter into the narrative. The author is describing graphically the sudden overflow of the Nile, when its waters have swollen to an unusual height; and as one of the disastrous consequences, he naturally refers to the extensive destruction of cattle. Can the intelligent reader be at any loss respecting the *mode* of this catastrophe? Does the ruinous overflow of the river form a sort of inland sea, or vast baptistery, to which the herds of land animals are brought, and in whose waters they are dipped? Is this, in truth, a case of immersion at all,—or rather, do not the physical circumstances force us to recognise it as a plain instance of overwhelming? The land animals are browsing upon the pasture ground; the flood of waters rushes upon them with irresistible inundation;—a few narrowly effect their escape, but most of them are overwhelmed, and perish. Dr. Carson’s explanation of this passage cannot



be expected to afford rational satisfaction, as it is manifestly founded upon a mistaken or misstated view of the facts recorded by Diodorus. He thus renders the original,—“Many of the land animals, βαπτίζόμενα, immersed *in the river*, perish.” But this is grossly incorrect, inasmuch as the Greek says not one word about being immersed *in the river*, or in any portion of water whatever. Dr. Carson’s translation not only assumes quietly the point in debate, but invents for the Greek participle a construction which is not found in the original, or necessarily suggested by the connexion. Let the reader carefully study and compare the entire example, which is as follows:—Τῶν δὲ χερσαίων θηρίων, τὰ πολλὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ περιληφθέντα διαφθείρεται, βαπτίζόμενα. On this plain passage, Dr. Carson thus strangely enough annotates:—“The *sinking* of animals in water is here called *baptism*. What then is *baptism* but *immersion*?” Now, were we to concede that this description applies to the *sinking* of animals, we should still feel warranted to inquire, where is the *dipping* for which this author contends, as the exclusive signification of βαπτίζω? In regard to the *mode* of this baptism, it cannot be too earnestly pressed upon the minds of all parties, that the question is not how the animals perished in the water, but whether or not they were put into the water; and this point, on which the entire weight of the case rests, is rendered perfectly indubitable by the language of Diodorus. The overflowing water came upon the animals, surrounded them, overwhelmed them, and in this manner their destruction was effected.

That we have correctly expounded the sense of

βαπτίζόμενα in the preceding example, seems to be evinced by the unvarnished statement of facts; and were confirmation needed, it would be amply supplied by another passage from the same author, which is free from all shadow of ambiguity. In the delineation of a battle, having occasion to speak of the disasters sustained by troops that had been routed and driven into a river, Diodorus says,—‘Ο ποταμὸς βιαιοτέρῳ τῷ ῥεύματι καταφερόμενος πολλοὺς ἐβάπτισε, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ὀπλῶν διανηχομένους διεφθείρε.—*Diod. Sic. Tom. II., p. 142.*—Thus rendered by Dr. Halley,—“The river flowing down with a more violent current, baptized many, and destroyed them swimming across in their armour.” As this instructive example, is not found among Dr. Carson’s instances, we are deprived of the benefit of any explanations or criticisms which he might have offered. The action described, however, is obviously level to every capacity. No ingenuity is requisite to discover the true meaning, as no philological torture could draw from the words a confession in favour of Dr. Carson’s theory. The soldiers were manifestly *dipped*, in the proper sense of that term, by the conquerors who drove them into the river; and subsequently the stream, swollen by recent rains, and sweeping down with great impetuosity, overwhelmed them. Their baptism is not identified with the process of putting them into the water, but with the violence of the current acting upon them when there. The river, in fact, could not, and did not dip them, for that action had been already accomplished by the victorious party; but the river could and did overwhelm and destroy them. One such example we hold to be capable of upsetting for

ever the preposterous interpretation that would bind down βαπτίζω in all its occurrences to the modal sense of immersion.

*Examples of βαπτίζω followed by the preposition εἰς.*—It may now be desirable to view this verb in construction with different prepositions, beginning with εἰς, which appears to be one of the most unusual, whether we consult the Greek of the classics, or that of the later period. The fact that instances of the construction of βαπτίζω with εἰς are so very few, corroborates the statement formerly made respecting the marked difference in sense between it and βάπτω, which furnishes numerous examples of regimen with this preposition. From the entire body of early classical Greek, Dr. Carson appears to have obtained only one instance of this peculiar construction, and to its character we have briefly referred in reviewing the testimony of Hippocrates. All his remaining examples are two from Josephus, two from Plutarch, and one from Heliodorus, who flourished respectively in the years 70, 110, and 390 of the Christian era, being thus beyond the pale within which he authoritatively included all admissible evidence. To these examples, in their order, we request a moment's attention. Josephus, *Bel. Jud.* Lib. II. cap. xviii. § 4, states that one Simon, after putting his friends to death, lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy, "*plunged, ἐβάπτισε, his sword up to the hilt into, εἰς, his own bowels.*" Such is Dr. Carson's inaccurate translation. In the original it is εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σφαγὴν, "*to his own slaughter;*" and the author appears to have mistaken σφαγὴν for σπιλάγνα bowels. In reference to the purifi-

cation of persons defiled by a dead body, Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* Lib. IV. cap. iv. § 6, says,—“*Having dipped, βαπτισάντες*, or put some of the ashes *into, εἰς*, spring water.” This example is contested by Mr. Godwin, who assigns some plausible reasons for setting aside the common rendering. He does not appear, however, to elicit any specific meaning from the clause in which βαπτισάντες occurs, or at least any meaning which we are able to reconcile with the construction. In the *Parall. Graec. Roman.* of Plutarch, p. 545, a Roman General is represented as “dipping, βαπτίσας, his hand into, εἰς, blood;” and in the edition of Plutarch by Reiske, vol. vi. p. 663, we encounter the expression,—“Baptize—βάπτισον—yourself into—εἰς—the sea.” The example from Heliodorus is,—“To baptize—βαπτίζειν—into—εἰς—the lake.”

On these examples, we beg to submit, for consideration, the following general remarks.—

1. The construction of βαπτίζω, with the preposition εἰς, if we are to judge by the slender fruits of Baptist industry, is almost wholly confined to writers whose testimony, according to Dr. Carson’s rule, comes too late. In the earlier classics this sort of formula seems to be almost unknown. But it may be objected that the later construction, in general, stands in more intimate relationship to the usage of the New Testament, and that in referring to the laws and limits of evidence, we ourselves have contended for its admissibility, as an important element in conducting to a right exposition. In accordance with the principles we have laid down, we do indeed admit the testimony even of the latest



Greek authors, convinced that it exhibits no substantive variation, and especially none from which our views can reap any advantage. In the present instance, however, it is an ascertained fact, that the construction of this verb with *εἰς*, and a substantive denoting the baptizing element, is proportionately of less frequent occurrence in the New Testament, than in either the earlier or later Greek. The entire collection of the Greek Scriptures supplies one solitary instance of the syntax in question; and its value, on the Baptist side of the question, as we shall demonstrate in due time, is completely destroyed by a rule which Dr. Carson has inconsiderately applied to the interpretation of the passage. By turning to our discussion of Mark i. 9, the reader will find that this pledge is faithfully redeemed.

2. We readily concede that immersion is clearly implied in the construction which has been exemplified, and we have no possible objection to the Baptist availing himself of the entire benefit of this concession. It could not, indeed, materially serve Dr. Carson's purpose, owing to the reasons already stated; nor will it be regarded by the more enlightened advocates of immersion, as furnishing any considerable accession to the strength of their cause. The instances found in the Greek language are so rare, and, above all, so little supported by the authority of the New Testament, that it would be extremely hazardous to argue from them to the mode of the baptismal ordinance. Besides, our general doctrine is by no means inconsistent with the idea, that the relation between the verb and its object may be secured by the act of immersion. What we

maintain is, that the usage of Greek does not render the relation a helpless dependant on that act, but shows us a variety of other ways in which it can be fully realised. This point is viewed in a light somewhat similar by Dr. Halley.—“ In the later writers,” he observes, “ it (*βαπτίζω*) is found occasionally occupying the place of *βάπτω*, which substitution, although I find but few instances in the earlier writers, is not opposed to the sense which I have given to the word. *Βαπτίζω*, in my view, has more breadth of meaning than *βάπτω*, and, therefore, although the earlier writers often employed it, where *βάπτω* would not answer their purpose, it might have been used occasionally as a substitute for *βάπτω*, under particular circumstances. Dr. Carson has well asserted the principle, (as with him it is an axiom,) that words, in certain circumstances, may be interchangeable, although they are not synonymous.”—p. 465.

*Examples of βαπτίζω, followed by a dative, with or without the preposition ἐν.* The use of this preposition will be adequately illustrated, when we come to canvass New Testament instances, and, therefore, we may confine our examination, at present, to the simple construction of the verb with the dative. From Heraclides Ponticus, a follower of Aristotle, Alleg. p. 494, we adduce the subjoined example:—*Επειδήπερ ἐκ τῶν βαναύσων δεάπυρος ὁ τοῦ σιδήρου μύδρος ἐλκυσθεὶς, ὕδατι βαπτίζεται, καὶ τὸ φλογῶδες ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως ὕδατι κατασβεσθὲν, ἀναπαύεται.*—Thus loosely rendered by Gale and Carson,—“ When a piece of iron is taken red-hot out of the fire, and put into water—ὕδατι βαπτίζεται—the heat is repelled

and extinguished by the contrary nature of the water.” Mr. Godwin translates as follows :—“ For a mass of iron, heated to redness, being drawn out by the smiths, is baptized [overwhelmed, dipped] with water, and that which was fiery by its own nature, being quenched with water, ceases to be so.” In this passage, the form of construction, an element of the highest importance to the interpreter, appears to have entirely escaped the notice of Dr. Carson, whose discussion of the meaning is based on Dr. Gale’s incorrect, or, at best, very questionable translation. What renders this case more valuable than many others, belonging to the same category, is the fact that we are here presented with two examples of precisely similar construction. The iron is said to be baptized *with water*—ὑδατι—and its fiery heat quenched *with water*—ὑδατι—both expressions containing the same dative of instrument. Had the writer intended to convey the idea of plunging the mass of iron into the water, εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ would have formed the natural and exact construction with βαπτίζεται. “ The iron,” observes Godwin, “ is baptized *with* water, not *into* water. The heated mass was not put into a vessel of water, but water was poured on it. It was overwhelmed with water.” The practice of the forge has been confidently appealed to by Baptists, but without success; as dipping and pouring are promiscuously resorted to in cooling and tempering the productions of the anvil. The smith is bound to no exclusive mode, and in this instance the rendering which the syntax fairly warrants, is indisputably opposed to the idea of immersion.

An example of the same regimen, by implication, is

found in the *Life of Homer*, attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In the Sixteenth Book of the *Iliad*, v. 333, the poet says of Ajax slaying Cleobulus,—“He struck him on the neck with his hilted sword, *and the whole sword was warmed with blood*”—Πᾶν δ' ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος αἵματι. On the latter clause of the sentence Dionysius remarks,—“In this he expresses greater emphasis, ὡς βαπτίσθεντος οὕτω τοῦ ξίφους ὥς τε θερμανθῆναι,—as the sword being so baptized as to be even warmed.”—*Vit. Hom.* 297. Dr. Carson has borrowed from Dr. Gale the following translation of this passage:—“In that phrase, Homer expresses himself with the greatest energy, signifying that the sword was so dipped in blood, that it was even heated by it.” Dr. Halley is indignant at this laxity of paraphrase, as an utter misrepresentation of the sentiment of Dionysius. “Will it,” he asks, “be credited, that there is not a word about dipping in blood in the original? Dr. Carson says, that one of his opponents is as guilty of forgery, as if he appended a cipher to a one-pound note. I do not say his version is a forgery, because I dare not say it is wilful; but I do say it is a falsehood. \* \* \* Dionysius says that the sword was so baptized; and the obvious inference is, with blood. To introduce the words ‘dipped in blood,’ on the authority of Dionysius, is as scandalous a misrepresentation (truth compels me to use this language) as I have ever detected, where such things are too common, in polemical theology. I ask again, Is Dr. Carson to be trusted without his authorities? In instances like this, his refutation would be to print the original on the same page as the translation.”—p. 478.



The example requires little additional discussion. Homer simply speaks of the sword as warmed with blood,—his commentator, Dionysius, represents the same implement as baptized, obviously implying a similar regimen. That the sword, then, was baptized, or overwhelmed with blood, is the sense at once sustained by the construction, and in accordance with the matter of fact. From the wound in the neck of Cleobulus, the blood flowed out so copiously as to cover and warm the sword of Ajax. Literal immersion, under the circumstances, was manifestly impracticable, and our opponents have not yet ventured to class this among the figurative applications. Combining, therefore, the facts, of which every one can form a correct judgment, with the construction which is not likely to be challenged, we have an additional instance of baptism without immersion.

Having canvassed two leading forms of construction, contributing each a certain amount of evidence to the meaning of βαπτίζω, we are now prepared for some examples of a more miscellaneous character, tending to strengthen our general conclusion. In his Life of Theseus, Plutarch cites the Sybilline verse:—

Ἄσκος βαπτίζῃ, δύναι δέ τοι οὐ θέμις ἐστι.

“As a bladder thou mayest be baptized, but thou art not destined to sink.” This example has been so thoroughly discussed by Drs. Carson and Halley, not to mention several names of inferior distinction, that little novelty, in the way of criticism, can be expected on either side. According to Dr. Carson, Vossius made this verse the foundation of a particular meaning, which he

ascribed to βαπτίζω; but there must be some error in the statement, for Vossius has neither quoted, nor commented on this Sybilline oracle. It is true he has made substantially the observation referred to by Carson; but he grounds his view on considerations and principles which are wholly unconnected with the bardic prediction of the fate of Athens.

The known application of this verse to the celebrated capital of Attica, supplies valuable assistance towards understanding its exact meaning. Destined to undergo grievous calamities, and repeatedly endangered in all its interests, that illustrious city should still survive its disasters, and be preserved from utter destruction. As a bladder, it might be baptized, but could not sink. The contrast, so tersely stated, presents an additional facility for eliciting the true sense, as antithesis commonly renders interpretation more definite and successful. In what sense, then, are we to understand the two terms, as they stand out boldly in designed mutual opposition? "Both words," observes Dr. Carson, "might, in many cases, be applied to the same thing indifferently, but in their characteristic meaning, as in the above verse, they are opposed. The expression in this verse is allegorical, literally referring to a bladder, or leathern bottle, which, when empty, swims on the surface; if sufficiently filled, will dip, but will not sink. In this view, it asserts that the Athenian state, though it might be occasionally overwhelmed with calamities, yet would never perish." Such is one of the interpretations proposed by this author; but as if he had entertained certain misgivings respecting its correctness, he

proceeds to supply us with another, which he considers to be “very suitable to the ambiguity of an oracle;” and he then arrives at the following general conclusion, in which the reader, without heavily taxing his memory, will recognise an old acquaintance.—“Nothing can more decisively determine the exact characteristic import of βαπτίζω, than this verse. It is *dip*, and nothing but *dip*.” It cannot fail, however, to strike any reflective reader, that the *dip* for which Dr. Carson argues in the rendering of this example, is exceedingly different from the *dip*, which he identifies with any of the preceding instances of baptism. This *dip*, in effect, is not *immersion*, even on his own showing; yet it is *baptism*.

The translation of the verse by Dr. Halley is as follows,—“As a bladder thou mayest be baptized, but thou canst not dip.” The difference is by no means inconsiderable, and, in order to sustain and illustrate the correctness of his rendering, he observes;—

“Δύνω is no more to sink than βαπτίζω, if by sinking is meant going deeper into the water than just below the surface. The action of the verb δύνω is fully and perfectly accomplished, as soon as the bladder is an inch or a line below the surface of the water. There is, indeed, no necessity of going downward at all to act the part of δύνας in his full costume and perfect propriety. Had the bladder entered a perpendicular wave, and risen at the same moment, provided it did not emerge, it would have played the part of δύνας to perfection.” In another portion of his argument, the author says:—“But if the bladder cannot dip, how can it be baptized? Its floating image among the waves supplies the solution.

Does the bladder enter the wave, or does the wave break upon the bladder? It floats upon the surface and cannot dip, but the curling wave may fall upon it, and so for a moment it is covered. The oracle is interpreted. As a bladder, the wave may pass over thee, but thou canst not sink beneath the surface. Thou mayest be baptized, but thou canst not dip.”—*Lectures*, pp. 352, 353.

Appended to the lecture from which we have borrowed this citation, are some useful critical *Notes*, embracing, principally, strictures on the views of Dr. Carson, and, in the instance before us, pointing out at least an apparent admission, which goes to subvert the Baptist argument. For example, when the learned champion of the Immersionists states, as the interpretation of the oracle, that Athens “might be occasionally overwhelmed with calamities, yet would never perish;”—“How beautifully,” exclaims Dr. Halley, “truth will unexpectedly develop itself! Overwhelmed with calamities is our baptism, the bladder overwhelmed with the waves, and emerging from them by its own buoyancy, is the very thing for which we contend.” On the part of Dr. Carson, the expression to which this pointed animadversion is addressed, is doubtless loose and unguarded; and it evidently furnished ground for the adverse criticism. Indeed, no Baptist author, whatever may have been his learning and acuteness, has hitherto accomplished the difficult task of commenting on the occurrences of βαπτίζω, which enter into the controversy, without practically betraying, at some point, that beloved *dip*, which theoretically he had proclaimed to be as unalter-



able as the laws of the Medes and Persians. This circumstance certainly claims the serious consideration of all whom it may concern, and it is the business of our opponents to reconcile it, as best they can, with the exclusiveness of their mode of baptism.

It appears no easy undertaking for Mr. Godwin to extract from this passage the idea of *continued* submersion, as the generic sense of βαπτίζω which he advocates; and yet, it will be noticed, he courageously attempts it in the course of his exegetical remarks. His translation is;—"A bladder, thou mayest be baptized, but it is not thy destiny to go in." We present his comment, which is, in several respects, clever and judicious. "It appears from this sentence, that a bladder might be baptized, and yet not descend in water. It could not possibly be dipped without going in. Therefore to be baptized, and to be dipped, must be different. Whatever else in this saying may be doubtful, this seems quite clear and certain. It might be overwhelmed and not go in; but it could not be dipped and not go in. This passage, therefore, supports the former interpretation, and it disproves the latter. A bladder in a stormy sea might be covered with water for some considerable time (?); but it would not descend in the water, either free from the influence of the waves, or when these came upon it. So the city might be subjected to many heavy and continued calamities; but still it would be preserved. It would not fall as many cities had done in times of peace, nor even in times of trouble would it perish. A ship baptized would descend in the water, but a bladder would not. So, heavy and continued

afflictions might destroy other cities, but not Athens.”—  
On *Baptism*, pp. 31, 32.

This example, we are of opinion, would prove more tractable in the hands of an advocate of the frequentative sense of βαπτίζω, the symbol of the Athenian state, in accordance with the evident meaning of the oracle, undergoing repeated rather than continued submersion. The defence, on that hypothesis, would at all events be more plausible, and to ordinary minds would probably bring a greater amount of conviction. Let us, however, attend to the exact amount of evidence which appears to be comprehended in this occurrence of the verb. Dr. Carson, as we have seen, closes his discussion of the verse with the customary allegation, that βαπτίζω means *dip*, and nothing but *dip*. His reasonings are met indirectly by Mr. Godwin, and formally challenged by Dr. Halley. Both writers labour to make it appear that to assign to this verb the sense of dipping, properly so called, would destroy the impressive contrast which the original so strikingly presents. If βαπτίζω forces its object even an inch beneath the surface, thus far it trenches upon the province of δύνω, and substitutes an unmeaning correspondence, for a vivid contrast. Each of these verbs, in that case, would express substantially the same action; the difference consisting in the depth which they respectively indicate, and in the implied consequences for which, however, they cannot be held responsible. This view might, perhaps, be regarded as affording some slight grounds for the contrasted representation of the passage, though at the expense of the peculiar force and beauty which characterize the saying

of the oracle. To *dip*, and to *sink*, taken in their obvious and accredited meanings, more naturally suggest the idea of resemblance, than that of contrariety.

Still we conceive that the accomplished writers referred to have failed to take advantage of the strongest position, in assailing Dr. Carson's proposed interpretation. If we can turn the enemy's guns upon himself, we may warrantably entertain a cheering presage of victory. It was stated formerly, in considering an example of βάπτω, that this learned author lays it down as an established principle, that when no part is specified, and none excepted, baptism is uniformly to be understood as the immersion of the whole body. Now, if this principle is of any value, instead of being confined to animal bodies, it must embrace all objects on which the action of the verb takes effect. When, therefore, the voice of the oracle announces that the symbol of Athens should be baptized, as no part is specified, and no exception is made, we are compelled to interpret the language of a complete and total immersion. There is no getting rid of this conclusion. The principle of Dr. Carson will inevitably sink his "leathern bottle" beneath the surface—will entirely submerge it. Is this, then, the meaning of the prophetic sybil? Or, rather, would not such an exposition involve the very ruin against which the glory of ancient Greece is here supposed to be protected by the powerful interposition of destiny? Will it be suggested, in opposition to our plain statement of the case, that though dipped in the water, the bladder will emerge by its own buoyancy? The objection is of no avail, for if the specific gravity of

the object carry it beneath the surface, the same cause is sufficient to detain it there, or perhaps sink it to a lower depth. Let it, therefore, be once baptized in the sense of total immersion, and the baptism becomes the undoubted symbol, not of a series of transient calamities, but of final destruction. On the other hand, alternately covered by the breaking wave, and floating lightly on the surface, it becomes the significant representative of a city, to use Dr. Carson's own language, "occasionally overwhelmed with calamities, yet never" perishing. The symbol is repeatedly baptized by the wave, but it is never immersed in the water. The *baptism* of Athens the oracle declares to be incompatible with the *immersion* of Athens. This, then, supplies another instance in which we affirm it to be impossible for the interpreter, on sound hermeneutical principles, to discover in βαπτίζω, this writer's "dip and nothing but *dip*."

The marked distinction between βάπτω and βαπτίζω, which the preceding instances go to establish, derives striking confirmation from the renderings of these verbs, in the controversial works both of Baptist and Pædobaptist authors. Dr. Halley has placed this point in a very strong and satisfactory light, by simply producing the results of a careful examination of several lists of examples. Having stated that he considers βαπτίζω more generic, and possessed of greater breadth of signification, than βάπτω, and having brought forward instances in support of this view, he proceeds to supplement the direct evidence, by the following collateral testimony.—"Dr. Carson admits no such distinction; but his own versions confirm my views, and show that βάπτω is more



nearly than βαπτίζω related to the English verb to dip. If the reader will go through his versions of the two words, it will be found, that while he generally renders the former to dip, he as generally renders the latter by some other word. On examining the second, third, fourth, and fifth sections of his second chapter in which he collects his instances of the primary signification of βάπτω, I find, if I count correctly, of the one hundred and four instances which he adduces, he renders it to dip, in one hundred and one, and in only three instances by other words, twice to immerse, and once to plunge. In the tenth section, in which he adduces thirty-seven citations of βαπτίζω, he renders it to dip only in seven instances; and by other words, as to baptize, to sink, to immerse, to drown, &c., in the other thirty. Such a difference could have been accidental, no more than the sun could have been lighted by accident. \* \* \*

Dip, continuing the modal verb, belongs more properly to βάπτω than to βαπτίζω, as Dr. Carson's citations show very clearly and distinctly.

“ But for this distinction,” continues Dr. Halley, “ I depend not alone upon Dr. Carson. To any list of citations, made without reference to this point, I carry the appeal. In my own veracity I have no right to challenge confidence, when I say, that in the course of my reading, some years since, with no thought of such a distinction, I hastily translated the several sentences in which I found the words; and in forty-eight instances of βάπτω, I rendered forty to dip, and six to dye: but of eighteen instances of βαπτίζω, only one to dip. The coincidence with Dr. Carson's lists may prevent my

Baptist friends from charging me with telling an impudent falsehood. But let us turn to the Essay of Professor Stuart, in the *Biblical Repository*, April, 1833. The citations correspond very much with those of Dr. Carson; but, as the Professor says he did not see Dr. Carson's book until the close of his labours, his versions were not copied. Of βάπτω, there are thirty-four instances, of which twenty-two are rendered to dip, and twelve by other words, chiefly equivalent as to plunge: but of forty-six instances of βαπτίζω, only one is rendered to dip, and forty-five by other words, frequently to overwhelm. I cite these instances to confirm the opinion expressed in the lecture, that βαπτίζω differs from βάπτω, in not so nearly representing our modal verb to dip. I know no better evidence than translations made without reference to the question."—*Lectures*, pp. 455, 457.

In these extracts, Dr. Halley has rendered important service to the cause of truth, by calling attention to what may be considered a new and valuable branch of evidence. The testimony of individual instances may be honestly contested, and perverse ingenuity may render almost interminable the discussion of the more doubtful or complicated examples. But the argument, which is based on the common facts of Baptist and Pædobaptist renderings, so far as it goes, is necessarily above exception; and that it bears testimony to some diversity of meaning between βάπτω and βαπτίζω, none who study the circumstances will have the hardihood to deny. Were the two verbs identical in sense, surely that identity would appear in translations made for no

party purpose, and more especially in translations by parties who loudly deny the existence of any difference whatever. Yet, as has been shown by Dr. Halley, the *fact of diversity* is as deeply implanted in the renderings of Dr. Carson, as in those of Professor Stuart. In regard to the amount and character of the diversity, we state candidly our conviction that the argument, at least in its general aspect, does not apply; but in relation to the fact of diversity, we hold it unanswerable.

Two instances have been produced from Polybius, and one from Strabo, of the application of βαπτίζω, to soldiers marching through water; and as these instances present a close mutual parallelism, the examination of one of them will enable us to ascertain the nature of the evidence which they furnish in common. When Alexander marched his army along a narrow passage, at the foot of Mount Climax, in Lycia, the sea having covered the path, we are informed by Strabo, Lib. XIV. p. 982, that “The troops—ἐν ὕδασι γενέσθαι—were in the waters, a whole day, μέχρι ὀμφαλοῦ βαπτιζομένων,—baptized up to the middle.” “Surely,” observes Dr. Carson, “this baptism was immersion;” and so ends his critical comment. But, if the passage be duly considered, a more careful, and less cavalier interpretation will be required to establish his favourite meaning. It were exceedingly desirable that critics in general, and especially writers on the Baptist controversy, would take the trouble to remember the sense of the English word *dip*, in the course of their learned lucubrations. When water forms the element in question, we should not lose sight of the fact, that the proper meaning of dip, is *to put the object*

*down into the water.* Surely this is the true modal sense of the term; and hence the question here demanding solution is,—Does Strabo represent the troops of Alexander as *thus dipped*? A slight examination of the passage will constrain any candid interpreter to answer in the negative. The use of βαπτίζω, let it be observed, is preceded in the narrative by an account of the troops being already in the water, so that this verb, from the circumstances of the case, cannot be expressive of the action of putting them into that element. A whole day, their march lay through the water, and during that entire period they were βαπτιζόμενοι, not certainly dipped, as designating the mode of putting them into the water, but baptized, in the sense of being covered by the water, up to a specified mark. How these soldiers got in, deponent saith not, but while they were in, he states distinctly that the water came up to their middle. Βαπτίζω, then, manifestly does not put Alexander's troops into the water—it does not dip or plunge them—but it aids in determining the condition in which they found themselves during that harassing and perilous part of their march. Even if a dipping, in the proper sense of the term, took place in the first instance, our position would not be, in the slightest degree, shaken; for, in regard to that dipping, Strabo maintains a profound silence. We may, indeed, if we please, imagine the immersion of the soldiers to be indicated by this verb; but it is a mere gratuitous hypothesis, inconsistent with fact, and possessing no claim to foundation in figure.

It does not appear, on the other hand, that the



participle in this occurrence exemplifies the continuative sense for which some of our Pædobaptist brethren strenuously contend. This statement will instantly secure acceptance with those who habituate their minds to the close analysis of language. No doubt the baptism of the troops did continue for a whole day, but its continuation we learn not from the use of βαπτίζομένων, but from the preceding part of the narrative. Had the historian informed us that Alexander's soldiers were in the waters at all, though they had not remained there more than a second, he might have added, without any violation of the proprieties of language, "being baptized up to the waist." The correctness of this view may be questioned, but it can be triumphantly sustained. The stringently modal sense, therefore, and the continuative sense, appear to us to be alike inadmissible in the interpretation of this interesting example; and the verb stands forth in the enjoyment of the latitude and liberty, which, in our view, constitute its legitimate inheritance. We feel satisfied, indeed, that the more comprehensive and thorough the sifting of the usage of βαπτίζω, conducted in the spirit of a discriminating Hermeneutics, it will become the more apparent, that the exclusive sense of dipping is unauthorized by the practice of the Greek language.

In the department of *Classical* evidence, attention has now been directed to the leading varieties of *mere example*, and of *construction*; and the testimonies cited have been generally submitted to a careful and detailed examination. Without pretending to have exhausted the occurrences of βαπτίζω, we have considered a number

of the most important ; and we are not aware that any *class of instances* remains untouched, or that any *variety of structure* has been omitted in the discussion. We can at least affirm, in all sincerity and truth, that no evidence, whatever may be its supposed value to the cause of our opponents, has been intentionally evaded,—no witness *spirited* away through apprehension of the effect of his testimony.

That the exclusively modal acceptation, for which our leading Baptists argue, is inconsistent with the physical circumstances, clearly indicated in several very prosaic occurrences of the term, we have laboured to evince ; while the exegesis which, in these cases, would take shelter under an alleged figurative sense, we have not hesitated to denounce as disreputable evasion. Far be it from us to prefer any charge of dishonesty against either the living or the dead ; but the judgment of the most upright is not incapable of being warped by prejudice, or blinded by conscientious zeal. The assertion that βαπτίζω denotes to dip, and only to dip, we hold to be utterly incapable of proof, by a full induction of the instances presented in the classical literature of Greece. On the contrary, the usage of philosophers, historians, and poets, as we have shown, forces the admission of considerable latitude as to mere mode, by applying the term indiscriminately to the immersion of an object in the baptizing substance, and to the bringing of the baptizing substance upon or around an object. Thus the hand of a dying warrior is baptized, when it is dipped into blood, cattle are baptized when the overflowing of the river overtakes and destroys them, and

the sea-coast is baptized, when the full tide pours in upon it the periodical inundation. Such is a specimen of the latitude in the use of this verb, sustained by an extensive variety of classical occurrences, and wholly incompatible, we submit, with the views of those who would identify it in all cases with the modal signification of its primitive. To this position, we anticipate fresh accessions of strength from the evidence yet to be considered.

Still farther, the preceding statements and reasonings render it abundantly clear, that the sense of βαπτίζω, far from being uniformly found an *exact fit*, has often to undergo straining or amputation, in order to accommodate its dimensions to the Procrustes bed of the Dippers. Figure is not always available; in various instances fact imperiously demands recognition, in assigning a sense to this verb, while compliance with the demand is not easily reconciled with the exclusive patronage of plunging. The correctness of this assertion is best vindicated in the writings of our most learned advocates of immersion. Nay, more, it is beyond all question, that the ability and critical acumen of these authors, taxed to the uttermost, have not succeeded in accomplishing the object, even to their own satisfaction. In the translation of those passages, which constitute the chosen testimony of Baptists to the truth of their system, how often do they shrink from what we should conceive to be the bounden and delightful duty of honestly placing before an intelligent Christian public, the English *dip*, as the representative of the Greek βαπτίζω? How often, as if haunted by the conscous-

ness of some secret misgiving, do they substitute other words, not altogether synonymous, if not to relax the stringency of their doctrine, at least to render the mode of its exhibition less unnatural, and more palatable? Dip has all the ground to itself in their theory, but it can seldom find a resting place for the sole of its foot in their translations. The fruit of *our* criticism goes to evince a greater latitude of application in the Greek classics; and, in this respect, it will be found that several of the instances we have yet to canvass are, if possible, still more decisive and satisfactory. When, therefore, the evidence which they contain, shall have been fairly and fully developed, we have no hesitation in anticipating that grounds will be laid for the deep and enlightened conviction, that the baptismal service of our Church is a reasonable and Scriptural administration, in blessed accordance with that high commission, which, in its generous provisions of infinite wisdom, contemplates ultimately the evangelization of the whole world.



## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE WRITINGS OF JOSEPHUS.

REASON FOR INTRODUCING JOSEPHUS EARLIER THAN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER WOULD WARRANT.—HIS TESTIMONY POSSESSES NO VERY DETERMINATE CHARACTER, AND RELATES TO MATTERS UNCONNECTED WITH THE CEREMONIAL ABLUTIONS OF THE JEWISH LAW, OR THE BAPTISM OF PROSELYTES.—INSTANCES;—BAPTISM OF ARISTOBULUS, WHICH ISSUED IN DROWNING;—BAPTISM OF SHIPS AT SEA UNDER VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.—REFERENCE TO AN INTERESTING FIGURATIVE APPLICATION.—GENERAL REMARK.

THE testimonies already adduced, we follow up by a specific notice of the usage of βαπτίζω, in the writings of Josephus. In bestowing on the evidence supplied by this learned Jew, an earlier consideration than the order of chronology would warrant, we are influenced, in some degree, by the fact that his use of the term is intimately allied to that exemplified in the works of several Greek authors, particularly those of Hippocrates, Lucian, Polybius, and Dion Cassius. Josephus was, indeed, contemporary with most of the penmen of the New Testament, and in his *Jewish Antiquities* he travels over the ground occupied by the historians and prophets of the ancient economy; yet, in no instance, does he designate any Jewish purification a *baptism*, and, as is well known, he never breathes the name of the initiatory

ordinance of Christianity. Under these circumstances, as a mere matter of arrangement, we deemed it more suitable to take the testimony of Josephus before that of the Septuagint and Apocrypha, leaving the latter to form a more appropriate introduction to New Testament evidence. Some have considered the silence of this distinguished author, respecting the subject of Jewish proselyte baptism, destructive of the pretensions of that observance to an antiquity more remote than the Christian era. We admit the circumstance, as it is commonly stated, to be indeed singular; while, on reaching that branch of the controversy, we may probably discover that it is not altogether unaccountable.

By Baptist writers the modal application of the verb is supposed to be triumphantly established in two passages of Josephus, both narrating, under different aspects, the murder of the high priest Aristobulus, by order of Herod the Great. In the history of the *Jewish War*, Book I., chap. 22, § 2, Josephus, speaking of Aristobulus, then in his eighteenth year, informs us that “the youth was sent by night to Jericho, and there he died, ὑπὸ τῶν Γαλατῶν βαπτίζομενος ἐν κολυμβήθεα, *being baptized by the Galatians in a pool.*” Had this account of the guilty tragedy stood alone, the faithful interpreter would probably have felt constrained to regard it as furnishing a veritable example of βαπτίζω, with a truly modal signification. He would have been very naturally led to the conclusion that the Galatians, at the instance of Herod, seized Aristobulus, plunged him headlong into the pool, and thus effected his destruction.

But let us turn to the *Jewish Antiquities*, Book XV., chap. 3, § 3, where we find a more particular account of the same foul deed, of which we purposely adopt the rendering of Dr. Carson, which is as follows;—"Pressing him (Aristobulus) down always, *as he was swimming*,—καὶ βαπτίζοντες ὡς ἐν παιδιᾷ,—and *baptizing* him as in sport, they did not give over till they entirely drowned him." In this fuller version of the affair, the evidence in favour of dipping or plunging, wonderfully evaporates. The careful reader of the two testimonies cannot conceal from himself the fact that, in the proper sense of the term, the Galatians never *dipped* Aristobulus at all. Under colour of amusement, they always pressed him down, and baptized him, as he was swimming, till they had perpetrated the murder. "Can any thing," demands Dr. Carson, "be more express and exact than this? Here the baptizers drowned the baptized person in the pool where they were bathing."—p. 63. Now, though deeply averse to hypercriticism, we are compelled to maintain that this able author, whatever may be his strength of assertion, has here made out no case for the *modal* administration of *Herod's baptism*! With our Baptist brethren, does not *dip* express *the act of putting an object into the water, or into some other baptizing element*? If this is not their meaning, let them honestly say so, that all parties may come to a clear mutual understanding; and, if it is their meaning, as we believe they will not hesitate to avow, let us ascertain how far it quadrates with the baptism of Aristobulus. From the express statement of Josephus, we learn two things,—first, that the Galatians *baptized* the high priest; and,

secondly, that they *did not put him into the water*. Aristobulus *dipped* himself, and was *baptized* by the Galatians. The passage cited from the *Antiquities* shows us distinctly, that the fated youth was already *swimming in the water*, when this destructive baptism was administered, by order of the heartless and bloody Herod. Whatever account, therefore, is to be given of the transaction, whatever operation we are to understand as denoted by βαπτίζω, the verb cannot mean to *dip*, in the sense of putting into the water, which we take to be the true and proper sense of *dip*. The idea of overwhelming, to which reference was had in discussing the evidence from the Greek classics, seems much more congenial to the term in these citations from Josephus, than that of dipping. That the assassins *pressed* their unfortunate victim *down in the pool*, is freely admitted; but that action, let it be noted, has a representative of its own in the original, and is not to be confounded with the baptism. By the pressure he was submerged, and the baptism, in immediate sequence, overwhelmed him with the rush and closing of the waters. This interpretation we suggest as strictly consonant to the known facts of the case, viewed in the order of time, while the specific force ascribed to βαπτίζοντες derives support from various classical examples, which have come under our consideration. It is also attended with the advantage of rescuing the author from the imputation of tautology; and we deem it by no means inconsistent with the usage of the term in other passages of Josephus. But whether our positive exposition be received or rejected, we must hold firmly on the negative side of



the question, that no ingenuity and no torture can identify the *baptism* of this testimony with *dipping*, properly so called.

The principal remaining instances in the writings of this author relate to a species of disaster, which is thus described by Dr. Halley;—"Brought under water, in any mode, ships are said to be baptized, often exposed to the storm, and overwhelmed by the waves, as well as struck by the beak of an enemy, or overborne by the weight of the lading." Examples under this class we subjoin. In the *Jewish Antiquities*, Book IX., chap. 8, § 2, speaking of Jonah's attempted voyage to Tarshish, Josephus says,—“When the vessel was about—βαπτίζεσθαι—to be baptized.” Again, in the narrative of his own *Life*, § 3, he says,—“Our ship *having been baptized*—βαπτισθέντος—in the midst of the Hadriatic.” The last instance we shall adduce is from the *Jewish Wars*, Book III., chap. 8, § 3, where we find the striking expression,—“The billow high raised—εβαπτίσε—*baptized them*,” to wit, certain vessels.

These and similar examples from other departments of Greek literature, it is sometimes attempted by writers on the Pædobaptist side, to explain, on the principle of continued submersion, while, of course, they endeavour to bar their application to the Christian ordinance. But this ground appears to us to be both untenable and dangerous;—untenable, because the continuative sense of βαπτίζω is not in evidence, and dangerous, because, so far as its influence goes, it virtually tends to the support of a baptism which would, in fact, drown all intrants into the Christian Church.

Such passages being confidently appealed to by the advocates of immersion, our business is to ascertain whether the force of the evidence they contain comes up to the mark. That the vessels, in these several instances, were sunk and destroyed, or in imminent danger of being so, is beyond dispute; but we are chiefly concerned to know more accurately, than most authors have deemed it necessary or expedient to determine, the exact part to be assigned to βαπτίζω, in these afflictive calamities. With the dip, and nothing but dip, of modern immersionists before our eyes, let us ask, Is this the correct rendering of the verb, when applied to the loss of vessels at sea? The vessels, we shall suppose, sink to the bottom, and the verb denotes all this;—and yet we are presumptuous enough still to inquire, Where is the evidence in support of *dipping*? If we force to a greater depth an object already in the water, can we, with strict propriety of language, be said to have dipped that object? Would it adequately convey the sense of the original to the English reader, were we to state that the ship which carried Jonah was about to be *dipped*, or, to advert to another passage, that a lofty billow *dipped* the vessel? Why, we ask again, does Baptist translation itself religiously avoid, in these and similar examples, its own favourite term? The reason is plain, as has been already suggested. *Dip*, as the proposed representative of βαπτίζω, is felt to be inappropriate; and hence recourse is had to a variety of substitutes. It may, indeed, be safely affirmed, that no man, well acquainted with our own vernacular, would describe a foundering vessel as being dipped in

the waters of ocean ; though a Greek, in recording the same disaster, could employ βαπτίζω, in perfect consistency with the demands either of Hellenistic or Classical usage. Now, if the truth of this statement cannot be successfully challenged, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that in these languages respectively, *dip* and βαπτίζω, however intimate their relationship, do not present the boasted exactness of mutual correspondence.

But let us consider the evidence of the passages more closely. In the first and second of them, it will be ascertained from the context, that the calamities indicated by the use of this verb, occurred during the violence of the tempest. This circumstance is not to be lost sight of in tracing the meaning. The billow, raised by the spirit of the storm, discharged an important office in the administration of these baptisms. In each of the cases this agency forms a component element in the cause of the disaster, and consequently the idea of *overwhelming* belongs essentially to each, by whatever term it may be expressed, or on whatever principle it is to be understood. But we have, in a former part, produced instances, in which the action of βαπτίζω is correctly represented by *overwhelm*, one of them so convincing, that even Dr. Carson unconsciously glided into the use of the term, in the course of his critical observations. It is possible, then, that Josephus may have employed this verb to denote the overwhelming of the vessels with the waves, as the first step towards their destruction. But is it probable or certain ? The Baptist will triumphantly inform us that

the ships went to the bottom, and demand tauntingly whether *that* is not an immersion. Let him, however, make sure that victory precedes his ovation. It is one thing to ascertain that a vessel has reached the bottom, and quite another *to prove that βαπτίζω sent it thither*. The bladder mentioned by the oracle was baptized by the wave; still it continued to float on the surface. Had the breaking of the wave upon it been attended with the effect of considerably increasing its specific gravity, it would have shared the fate of the ships described by Josephus. “A ship baptized,” says Godwin, “would descend in the water; a bladder would not.” The reason is too obvious to be stated; but the principle involved is one of the highest moment. It is of this nature.—A term, expressive of a certain action, does not include the consequences of that action, however close the link of connection. The foundering of the ships, in these instances, is not baptism, but a consequence of baptism.

This view is strongly supported by the third example from Josephus, which represents a billow high raised as baptizing certain ships. “Here,” says Dr. Carson, “is a sublime baptism. The surge, rising like mountains over the ships, immersed and sunk them to the bottom. The surge is the baptizer, the ships are baptized, and this baptism is the sinking of them to the bottom.”—p. 64. Here is the very error in Hermeneutics, which we have been exposing. Where did Dr. Carson learn that this baptism is the sinking of the ships to the bottom? No where. The author confounds baptism with its consequences; for even, on his own principles, the ships



might have been baptized, without paying a visit to the caves of ocean. Besides, it is worthy of remark, that he quietly substitutes sinking for dipping, as if the two words were perfectly synonymous. Alas! poor *dip*. How bepraised by thy Baptist admirers as general-in-chief; yet how often do they force thee to give place ignobly to such subalterns as *plunge*, *sink*, *immerse*, *submerge*, &c. The real action of the billow, in this instance, is easily ascertained. It clearly overwhelmed the vessels,—baptized them, thus filling them with water, and, of necessity, contributing to the final catastrophe.

We have no wish to conceal the circumstance, that βαπτίζω is applied by other writers to the loss of vessels at sea, in cases which do not appear to accord with the idea of overwhelming. But it is at least equally manifest, that the idea of dipping is wholly inadmissible, and the application of the term receives no countenance in our language. The difference is not unimportant either to the philologist or theologian. Conceding that the ships in question went to the bottom, we still ask any unprejudiced mind to compare that operation with the sense of the modal βάπτω, as applied to Lazarus, for instance, when he was requested to *dip the tip of his finger in water*, and cool the tongue of the rich man tormented in flames. In the latter example, mode is undeniable, the reference being distinctly to the action of putting an object into a liquid; whereas, in the former, the object is contemplated as previously in the liquid, while various influences combine to make it descend to a greater depth. In the one case βάπτω

denotes dip, and nothing but dip,—in the other βαπτίζω conveys an idea of which *dip* is not the English representative. Even those examples, therefore, which, on superficial inspection, seem most favourable to the cause of our opponents, when more closely examined, readily yield their tribute of support to our doctrine of the greater latitude of βαπτίζω, and its consequent refusal to submit to the modal restriction which characterizes the primary sense of its ancestor.

In his *Jewish Wars*, Book IV., chap. 3, § 3, Josephus employs the term figuratively, to denote the ruin which a vast influx of people, chiefly composed of lawless banditti, brought upon Jerusalem. We notice the example here to illustrate the usage of Josephus, though it belongs properly to the department of figurative applications. Describing the effect produced by the accession of such a multitude, Josephus says of them,—“Who, even apart from (the influence of) sedition—ἐβάπτισαν—*baptized, overwhelmed* the city.” Dr. Carson conceives the figure to be borrowed from the idea of a ship at sea, which, being overburdened, and ill-managed through the dissensions of the crew, goes down. In this he is mistaken, and his mistake has evidently arisen out of inattention to the preceding context. With reference to Mr. Ewing’s proposed translation, he asks, “What did the robbers *pour upon* or *into* the city?” We answer promptly, they *poured themselves into* the city; and had Dr. Carson consulted the brief section from which his example is taken, he would have made this discovery. Josephus expressly speaks of the crowds who baptized Jerusalem, as ἐπεισχομένους—(some authorities

read ἐπιχέουμένους)—*poured upon, or poured in addition to the former population.* The consequent destruction is mainly, if not solely, to be attributed to the tide of people that flowed into Jerusalem, and would have accomplished its ruin, independently of the misdeeds of faction. The idea of inundation, then, clearly forms the basis of the figure, and is recognised accordingly by the best authorities, as in Hudson's standard edition of Josephus, which renders the Greek, *urbem obruerunt*, they overwhelmed the city. We noticed similar instances, it will be recollected, which are explained on exactly the same principle, by the distinguished Greek scholar AST, in his *Lexicon Platonicum*.

Baptist writers are in the habit of urging strongly, that even in cases where it may be difficult to elaborate their favourite mode, the use of βαπτίζω, and its derivatives, confessedly indicates a far more copious application of water, than consists with the practice of their opponents, in the administration of the ordinance of baptism. Were this a mere imputation upon our consistency, we could return the compliment with usury. No Baptist minister, at least, should prefer such a charge, unless he is a veritable *dipper*. If he merely *pop down* the head of a *subject* already in the water, he cannot surely pretend to have *baptized* or *dipped* the whole person. But if Baptists are prepared to make a transition from *mode*, to the *quantity* of the baptizing element, we are not without hope that the *quaestio vexata*, between us and them, will reach a speedy and felicitous adjustment.

## CHAPTER NINTH.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE SEPTUAGINT AND APOCRYPHA.

GENERAL VALUE OF THE SEPTUAGINT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—INFREQUENT OCCURRENCE OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ.—UTILITY OF COLLATING GREEK WITH HEBREW.—IMPORTANT TESTIMONY FROM 2 KINGS V. 14.—RELATIONS OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ WITH ΛΟΥΩ CONSIDERED.—REPLY TO DR. CARSON'S DISSERTATION ON ΛΟΥΩ, INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE BATH AMONG THE ANCIENT GREEKS.—USE OF ΛΟΥΤΗΡΕΣ AND ΝΗΠΤΗΡΕΣ IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, COMPARED WITH THAT OF ΛΟΥΤΗΡ, AND COGNATE TERMS IN THE SEPTUAGINT.—NAAMAN'S BAPTISM FULLY DISCUSSED, IN CONNECTION WITH THE WASHING ENJOINED BY THE PROPHET.—EGYPTIAN MODE OF BATHING OPPOSED TO THE ASSERTION THAT ΛΟΥΩ IMPLIES IMMERSION.—FIGURATIVE INSTANCE OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ, FROM ISA. XXI. 4.—EXAMPLES FROM THE APOCRYPHA,—JUDITH, XII. 7, WISDOM OF SIRACH, XXXI. 25, (30),—NOT EASILY REDUCIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF BAPTIST MODE.

THE Greek diction of the early Alexandrian school exerted, indirectly, considerable influence on the language and style of the New Testament. This influence flowed chiefly in the channel of the Septuagint, and of the Apocryphal writings of the Old Testament. In Egypt was the Septuagint born—it is an Egyptian, “and its *speech* bewrayeth it.” And that this venerable version, to a great extent, stamped its image on the Greek of Evangelists and Apostles, does not at this time of day require to be demonstrated. It may be, there-



fore, of some importance to ascertain the sense of βαπτίζω, in the Septuagint and Apocrypha, though, unhappily, in these fields, the harvest is not very abundant. We introduce this part of the subject with one or two preliminary remarks.

1. In this version of the Hebrew Scriptures, the very infrequent occurrence of βαπτίζω strikes us as somewhat remarkable. Of the derivative nouns, denoting baptism, there is not a solitary example throughout the entire Septuagint. Nor does the verb occur in those portions where its presence might be most confidently anticipated. In the account of the ceremonial immersions, and numerous other washings enjoined under the Mosaic dispensation, the term βαπτίζω is not once employed in any of its inflections. Nay, we look in vain for its application to any purely Jewish rite, through the entire collection of the ancient canonical Scriptures. In the Septuagint, as in the works of Hippocrates, βάπτω is almost exclusively appropriated to the action of dipping, and it occurs nearly *twenty times*; whereas βαπτίζω is found only *once*, with a literal signification. Whatever other inferences this state of things may legitimately warrant, it is incontestable, that the translators practically recognised a distinction between the two verbs, and also that their version cannot afford much aid in determining the mode of the baptismal ordinance.

2. The comparison of the Greek version with the original Hebrew, constitutes generally a valuable source of Scripture elucidation. As an efficient auxiliary, in the interpretation of individual words, the relation of a version and its original is almost necessarily limited to

cases of *literal* rendering. For this limit, a satisfactory reason can be assigned. When a translator follows what he regards to be the *sense*, without closely adhering to the *language* of his author,—or, which amounts to the same, when he either *introduces* figures of speech, or *varies* those of the original, in obedience perhaps to the laws which regulate diversity of idiom, the comparison of the two languages will shed but a faint and feeble light on the meaning of a disputed term. In maintaining that in such cases he who compares, for instance, Hebrew with Greek, can reap little benefit, we do not assume the essential vagueness or obscurity of a term when taken in a figurative acceptation. On the contrary, we hold the tropical and proper senses to be in themselves equally definite, and equally amenable to the laws of Hermeneutics. But when two words in different languages exhibit no literal correspondence,—when the one expresses in figure what the other conveys by its own proper meaning,—it is obvious that their mutual comparison must prove unavailing, till the sense of each has been ascertained by an independent process of inquiry. In the authorized version, for example, of Isa. xxi. 4, we find the words “Fearfulness affrighted me,” rendered from the Hebrew;—the translation of this clause in the Septuagint is,—*ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει*—“iniquity baptizes me.” Now, the simple comparison of *affright* with *baptize*, it is self-evident, can afford no aid in ascertaining the sense of either.

The earliest occurrence of *βαπτίζω* in the Septuagint is found in 2 Kings v. 14, referring to the miraculous cure of Naaman’s leprosy.—“And Naaman went down,

—καὶ ἐβαπτίσατο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ—and *baptized himself in, or at, the Jordan*, seven times, according to the saying of Elisha.” This forms the solitary Septuagint instance of the verb with a literal meaning; and we have so rendered it from that ancient *version*, as to exhibit the leading views taken of the passage by the advocates and opponents respectively, of exclusive immersion-baptism. Our Baptist friends, as may be expected, adopt and vigorously defend the authorized translation, as expressing at once the sense of the Septuagint, and that of the original Hebrew.

In the discussion of this testimony, some Pædobaptist writers contend, that the *baptism* to which Naaman submitted, is to be considered strictly synonymous with the *washing* enjoined by the prophet. Their line of argument is simple, and appears plausible. The Syrian general, say they, was commanded to go and *wash seven times* in Jordan, and in obedience to the command, after the most unjustifiable hesitation, and even refusal, he was ultimately induced to *baptize himself seven times* in “the river of Israel.” The case now appears plain. These baptisms, we learn explicitly from the sacred historian, carried into effect the injunction of Elisha; and hence it is argued that in this instance *λούω* and *βαπτίζω* present exact correspondence of signification. Such reasoning, however, has no solid foundation in the philosophy of language, and, if admitted, would inevitably involve the interpreter in hopeless confusion. We cherish, as cordially as Dr. Carson could have desired, the strong conviction that two or more terms may, in certain situations, be interchangeable, while they are by

no means synonymous. It is no uncommon, though a perfectly transparent fallacy, to suspend identity of meaning on the mere circumstance that, in a proposition, one word may be substituted for another, without altering the sense. We may say indifferently *the ship foundered*, or *the vessel perished*, in relation to the same catastrophe; but this phraseology does not imply that *ship* and *vessel* have precisely the same meaning, or that *foundering* and *perishing* express the same thought, without modification. If there is evidence to determine that Naaman dipped himself in Jordan, we have candor enough to admit, that in so doing he complied substantially with what was required of him; while we hold it equally clear on the other side, that the *washing* explicitly enjoined by the prophet, did not necessarily imply *immersion*. A full and minute inquiry into the subject is indispensable.

The relations which the verbs λούω and βαπτίζω sustain to each other, enter more largely and profoundly, than we should have anticipated, into the consideration of the *mode* of the baptismal institute. This arises chiefly from the fact, that in the New Testament, baptism is more than once referred to as a washing, and is frequently met, under the same aspect, in the writings of the Greek fathers. The point has recently assumed some importance in the controversy, owing principally to the learned criticisms of President Beecher, and the detailed and earnest reply of Dr. Carson, which he styles a “Dissertation on λούω.” As the *baptism* of Naaman, so closely connected with the divinely prescribed *washing*, introduces this branch of the general inquiry,



we consider the present the most favourable opportunity for advancing the views which we have deliberately formed, and to which we solicit attention, in the shape of a—

REPLY TO DR. CARSON'S DISSERTATION ON ΛΟΥΩ.

The general doctrine of the *Dissertation*, respecting the meaning of λούω, may be presented in the language of the author.—“That the word does not express mode I readily admit. This must be determined by circumstances; though, as a matter of fact, immersion is almost always the way of bathing. All I contend for from this word is, that the object to which it is applied is covered with the water, and that when used without a regimen in the context, it refers to the whole body. The application of this word to baptism shows that the rite was a bathing of the whole body; and, as immersion is the usual way of bathing, baptism must have been an immersion, because when it is called a bathing, the reference would be to the common way of bathing, not to a merely possible way.”—From these statements, which he puts forward as the comprehensive results of his critical investigation, Dr. Carson, as the reader will easily anticipate, draws the usual conclusion, that “baptism is immersion, and that nothing but immersion is baptism.”

In reviewing the *Dissertation* of this author, we commence by observing, that it opens with a singular mistake in the department of historical criticism. “The philosophical linguist, Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen,” says

Carson, “in distinguishing the words *λούω* and *νίπτω*, makes the first signify to *wash* or *bathe* the *whole* body, the last to wash or bathe a *part*. This distinction,” he adds, “has been generally recognised since the time of Campbell.” Now, we must state broadly and distinctly, that Dr. Campbell possesses no claim whatever to the posthumous honour with which he is here invested. The fame of the Scottish divine and philologist has nothing to fear from the pen of detraction;—it is too firmly established on the basis of acknowledged ability, and extensive erudition. As little does it require the aid of predatory appropriations from the republic of letters. Who was the real author of the distinction in question it does not concern us to determine; but the reader may easily satisfy himself, that the discovery which Carson attributes to Campbell, was substantively known even to Schrevelius, who died before Campbell was born; while it is also made sufficiently intelligible in the lexicons of Scapula and Stephanus. Such a historical blunder does not form an augury of good promise at the commencement of a learned and critical dissertation.

The distinction noticed by Dr. Campbell, in common with many preceding Greek scholars, meets generally the approval of Dr. Carson; but he is disposed to rest it on grounds somewhat different, and he also modifies considerably its character. According to his view, the essential distinction between *λούω* and *νίπτω* does not consist in the one applying to the *whole*, and the other to a *part* of the object washed; but the two verbs express diverse kinds of washing.—“One of them,” he

observes, “ may most generally be translated by our word wash, though *wash* is rather general for it ; and the other may almost always be translated by our word *bathe*, though we sometimes translate it also by *wash*. In the one, (λούω) the *washing* is by the pressure and motion of the water without manual operation, as in our word bathe, yet this bathing may also be accompanied with washing by the hand, though it is not signified by it. In the other (νίπτω), the action of the hand in washing is almost always necessary. \* \* \* Now, while this accounts for the fact asserted by Dr. Campbell, it will also allow the possibility of the application of νίπτω to the whole body, if it must be all successively washed ; and it will allow the application of λούω to a part, if the part is specified.”

For the distinction thus unhesitatingly drawn by Dr. Carson, we can discover no adequate grounds either in etymology, or in the usage of the Greek language. Those who delight in digging for *roots*, in their simplest and most ancient forms, have made no discovery tending to the support of the author’s hypothesis. The probability is, that in framing it, he was influenced by the sense of the Middle Voice of λούω, which almost invariably corresponds to our *bathe* ; while in the Active Voice, it appears pretty uniformly to include in its meaning that very *manual operation*, which he puts to the account of an accidental or adventitious circumstance. Thus, in the Iliad, B. XXIV., v. 587, female servants are said to have *washed* the dead body of Hector, and anointed it with oil. Surely, manual operation formed an essential part of this washing, which is yet denoted

by λούω. The same term is employed when the companions of Achilles are commanded to wash the purple gore from the body of Patroclus; and it is again repeated when, in obedience to the command, they prepare warm water, *wash* the body, and anoint it copiously with oil.—Iliad, B. XVIII., vv. 345—350. Also, in the Iliad, B. V., v. 905, Hebe is represented as bathing Mars, after the grievous wound he received in battle; or, as Damm expresses it in his *Lexicon Homericum*, “She washed him in a bath.” These instances are too clear to be controverted, and they constitute merely a specimen of the examples which might be adduced. Indeed, we shall find, as we proceed, that, among the ancient Greeks, friction, or hand-washing, entered into the operation of bathing much more extensively than Dr. Carson seems to have been at all aware.

In exemplifying the peculiar force of νίπτω, according to the same authority, the action of the hand in the washing is almost always necessary. But if the necessity does not extend to all instances of the application of the verb, the meaning assigned cannot be received, as embracing the essential distinction between it and λούω. The author has not, we believe, asserted that friction in washing enters radically into the signification of νίπτω; and yet short of this point, his more refined philosophical analysis must be resolved into the old and commonly recognised distinction. Now, that this verb does not necessarily imply the action of the hand, in performing the ablution, is established incontrovertibly by a variety of examples, one of them found among Dr. Carson’s own quotations. In the Iliad, B. X., v. 572,



several of the Grecian warriors are represented as *washing* off their perspiration in the sea; and in the lines which immediately follow, the *κῦμα θαλάσσης*, “the sea-billow,” is said to perform the same operation. The washing, in the former instance, is done with the hand; in the latter, the ocean-wave is the *washer*, and *νίπτω* is the original of both. But, if Dr. Carson’s distinction were founded, the latter washing should be expressed by *λούω*. President Beecher, who, to some extent, combats this philological novelty of the Baptist author, refers to a passage of Euripides, in which *νίπτω* is applied to the “bathing of a whole herd of oxen in the sea,” and here, as he justly observes, “friction, hand-washing, &c., are all out of the question.” Sophocles, *Oed. Tyran.* v. 1228, referring to the dark deeds perpetrated in the Theban Palace, says, that “neither the river Ister, nor Phasis could—*νίψαι*—wash away its secret abominations.” Here, again, it is the powerful stream of water, and not a hand, that performs the action denoted by the verb. But as this point is of little moment, and has no direct bearing on our subject, we dismiss it by merely stating, for the information of the general reader, that the distinction adopted by Dr. Campbell, from the older lexicographers, is still substantially in force among our best Greek scholars, who yet acknowledge, with all candor, that the exceptions are neither few nor unimportant.

The meaning of the term *λούω* demands a fuller investigation, inasmuch as it sustains obvious and intimate relations with the mode of Christian baptism. We see no ground for objecting to the general principle, that

when the verb is employed, without any regimen expressed or implied, the washing is not confined to a part, but comprises the whole body. In the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, for instance, persons are spoken of who must be—*λελουμένους*—*washed, bathed*; and as no part is specified, and none appears to be excepted even by implication, the washing is not partial, but must be understood of a total ablution. Of this usage, the appropriateness of which commends itself to the good sense of mankind, numerous and pertinent examples from the classics have been produced, and especially by Dr. Carson. But with this unquestioned fact, to which the practice of the Greek language bears decided testimony, he has unaccountably mixed up a species of antiquarian fiction, the product of a crude and incautious philosophy. We say *unaccountably*, because, admitting that *λούω* does not necessarily express mode, he yet contends, from what he conceives or assumes to be the known circumstances of the case,—though these circumstances, as we shall prove, have no foundation in reality,—that it generally implies the action of putting the body into the water, and uniformly requires it to be covered with the water. “The application of this word to baptism,” he says, “shows that this rite was a bathing of the whole body; and, as immersion is the usual way of bathing, baptism must have been an immersion.” On these assertions and inferences, respecting mode, we are directly at issue with the author, and feel prepared to convict him of ignorance of the ancient usage which he makes the basis of his argument, and on which he erects a specious, though tottering, superstructure.

In tracing the signification of *λούω*, and its derivatives, the main difficulty encountered by the interpreter is not connected with the extent of the ablution as partial or total, but relates to the *mode* in which the cleansing element may have been applied. Were this view challenged, the nature of the case would form its complete justification. A writer, such as Hippocrates, in his great work on medicine, may have frequent occasion to prescribe washing or bathing; but the process being perfectly understood by those for whom his prescriptions are intended, he does not consider it requisite to describe the bath as used by his countrymen. The same remark will equally apply to the medical writings of our own age and country, or, indeed, of any age and country. Still we are happily in possession of valuable facilities for ascertaining in what manner the people of ancient Greece availed themselves of the luxury of the bath. The Greek author, to whom we have now referred, is a standard witness with Dr. Carson, and, therefore, the sense in which he employs *λούω* is a point of some consideration. Now, if we consult the Greek lexicon to Hippocrates, by Galen, who flourished A.D. 164, and whose attainments—as a scholar and physician, and the author of esteemed works in the Greek language—entitle him to occupy a high position, in expounding the writings of the father of medical science, we shall find his judgment directly at variance with the dogmas of our modern critic. His explanation of the term in dispute is as follows;—*Λδυν*] οὐ μόνον τὸ λούειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ αἰονᾶν.—“*Λδυν* denotes not only to wash or bathe, but also *αἰονᾶν* to moisten, foment, pour, or sprinkle.”

Whichever of these senses may be adopted in any occurrence, especially if the passage consist of a medical prescription, we must readily perceive that the term denotes the application of the water to the object, and not the immersion of the object in the water. The leading signification of *αἰονᾶν*, according to Erotianus, another Greek authority of the second century, is to *foment*, an operation which, all will admit, was not performed by plunging into a bath. Thus, in the evidence of men, to whom Greek was vernacular, and whose professional studies made them thoroughly acquainted with the writings of Hippocrates, we are supplied with solid grounds for affirming that, in the usage of that distinguished author, the sense of dipping did not belong to *λούω*, either directly, or by implication.

On this point, however, we are in capacity to produce testimony stronger and more pertinent than the lexical expositions given by learned Greeks, who were yet certainly acquainted with the meaning of their own language. In instances unnumbered, indeed, the references of classical writers to the use of the bath, furnish no clue whatever to the ancient mode of enjoying or administering that luxury, common to all ages. From mere general allusions, nothing specific, of course, can be gathered. Still we have the pleasing fact to record, that literary industry and antiquarian research have recently opened up several valuable sources of information. In the age of Homer, the vessel for bathing went by the name of *ἄσαμίνθος*, and among Greeks, of a somewhat later age, it was called *πύελος*.



Occasional references are also found in the writings of both periods to the act of *going into* the bath, and *coming out of* the bath. Such expressions Dr. Carson is careful to italicize, obviously with the intention of suggesting to the reader a strong incidental argument in support of immersion. Nothing could be more delusive or unfounded. We are not aware that a solitary particle of evidence can be drawn to the cause of immersion, from the mode of bathing practised by the ancient Greeks, while, on the opposite side, there is presented a very large and conclusive mass of testimony. In the excellent *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, published some years since, under the able superintendence of Dr. W. Smith,—a work practically illustrating the advantages of division of labour,—the article on *Baths* presents us with the following clear and important statement, respecting the mode of using the ἀσπαμίνθος.—“It would appear, from the description of the bath administered to Ulysses in the palace of Circe, that this vessel *did not contain water itself*, but was only used for the bather to sit in, while the warm *water was poured over him*, which was heated in a large cauldron or tripod, under which the fire was placed, and when sufficiently warmed, was taken out in other vessels, and *poured over the head and shoulders* of the person who sat in the ἀσπαμίνθος.” From this pregnant instance the advocate for dipping may learn an instructive lesson. It is no proof of immersion, that a party is represented as going *into the bath*, and coming *out of the bath*. In the case of Ulysses, the descent and ascent are both distinctly recorded; while the author expressly informs us, that the ablution was

performed by *pouring* or *affusion*, and *not* by *immersion*. This testimony must tell on every discerning mind. Writers may produce, from the Greek classics, hundreds of vague allusions to the ancient practice of bathing; but when we come to close quarters,—when we bring forward a case which specifies the *modus operandi*, the mode of operation,—when the practical details are furnished, and that too incidentally, the proof of *dipping*, so confidently affirmed or anticipated, becomes less than nothing, being converted into a negative quantity on the side of our Baptist friends. As we are averse from the withholding of authorities, we refer the reader to the *Odyssey*, B. X., vv. 359–365, for an account of the *affusion*-bath of Ulysses, in the palace of Circe.

That this instance, as may be expected, is not solitary, and that the views we advocate possess a claim to intelligent acceptance, we proceed to evince, by proofs which will bear the scrutiny of the severest logic. The bathing-vessel, styled anciently ἀσαμίνθος, and in later times πύελος, we have reason to believe, was little used among the Greeks, for many ages anterior to the introduction of Roman manners and customs. On this point, we have evidence, if possible, more satisfying than any mere statement from the pen of classic antiquity. If our judgment is to be swayed by the most unexceptionable of all testimony, the sculptured representations of Greeks, actually enjoying the bath, as exhibited on the ancient vases, we must of necessity believe that the immersion system was entirely excluded. We do not overstate the case, as against the doctrine of our opponents. In the *Dictionary of Antiquities*, already quoted,

it is broadly asserted, that so far as this important class of witnesses is concerned, not even a solitary testimony has been discovered, tending to identify the ancient mode of bathing, with that which is so generally prevalent in our own times. We extract the words ;—“ On ancient vases, on which persons are represented bathing, *we never find any thing corresponding to a modern bath, in which persons can stand or sit* ; but there is always a round or oval basin (λουτήρ or λουτήριον), resting on a stand (ὑπόστατον), *by the side of which those who are bathing, are represented standing undressed, and washing themselves.*” The writer appropriately introduces, in illustration of the preceding statement, an interesting *wood-cut*, taken from one of the vases in Sir Wm. Hamilton’s collection ; and its value is greatly enhanced by the fact that, in this instance, the λουτήρ has inscribed on it the word δημόσια *public*, showing it to be no private concern, but one of the ordinary public baths of Greece. Here, again, is bathing—public bathing in the customary manner,—but where is immersion ? Can we conceive of evidence more convincing ? The representation on the vase does not point to “ a possible way of bathing,” but to the mode commonly practised by the people. It may be added, that this evidence possesses the advantage of being perfectly disinterested, as the author was evidently unaware of the bearing of his views on any doctrine or observance of Christianity.

In connection with the bathing-vessel, presented in relief on the ancient vases, we may notice the λουτήρες and νιπτήρες, a species of basin, which were generally placed in the porticoes of Christian churches, during

the earlier centuries. On the meaning of these terms respectively there is, as usual, some difference of opinion between Dr. Carson and President Beecher. With reference to the several purposes served by these “wash-basins,” as the terms have been rendered, the former author says, “They might be called either *λουτήρες* or *νιπτήρες*, because the hands might be either *bathed* or *washed*.” In reply, Mr. Beecher shows, on the authority of Julius Pollux, Leg. Lib. 10, cap. 10, that *λουτήρ* or *λουτήριον* was employed to denote a vessel in which to *wash* the face and hands, and that it is used in pointed antithesis to the Greek term for a *bathing*-vessel. The example, enforced and illustrated by the reasonings of the learned President, appears to have turned the forces of his daring opponent, who, at all events, did not renew the assault in that part of the field. We feel satisfied, however, that evidence bearing still more pointedly on the question at issue, may be derived from the allusions of the fathers to these purifications of Christian antiquity. If the distinctive meaning of *λούω* and *λουτήρ*, affirmed by Dr. Carson, were, in point of fact, recognised in patristic Greek, on what principle could the interpreter dispose of the following passage? Chrysostom, Opp. tom. vi. Hom. LXXXII., says,—“As the *λουτήρες*, filled with water, stand before the church-doors,—*ἵνα νίψῃς τὰς χεῖρας σου*—that you may wash your hands,” &c. Here, a Greek author, familiar with these Christian ablutions, connects *λουτήρ* with *νίπτω*, the verb which is confessedly expressive not of hand-*bathing*, but of hand-*washing*. The worshipper, at the entrance to the church *νίπτει* *washes* his hands in the *λουτήρ*. Had the usage.



for which Dr. Carson contends, really characterized the language, with whose principles Chrysostom was so intimately conversant, he must either have employed *νιπτῆρες*, in the former clause of the sentence, or *λούσης* in the latter. But as the phraseology stands, the Greek language, in the hands of this eloquent father, is manifestly at variance with the distinction laid down so positively by our modern controversialist.

Dr. Carson had deliberately asserted, in his *First Reply* to President Beecher, that “*λουω*, like our word *bathe*, applies to animal bodies only;” as “we do not,” said he, “speak of bathing cloth.” In his rejoinder, the latter produced detailed proof of its application to *wood*, to *clothes*, to *a couch*, and to *a cloak*; at the same time playfully observing, that these were not surely animal bodies! The *Second Reply* of Carson contains a very brief admission of his former error, while, in regard to the import of the verb, he still hazards a bold assertion, the truth of which we have already, in a great measure, disproved.—“The examples,” says he, “produced by Mr. Beecher, prove that *λούω* sometimes applied to other things besides animal bodies; but none of them prove that the thing so washed was not *covered with the water*. This is all we want: the water might be applied by sprinkling, or by pouring, or in any way.” By the expression—“Covered with water,” we presume the author intended to represent the body, as placed in a bath or other convenient receptacle, where it is covered with water, as the result either of *immersion*, or of an *affusion* so copious, that every part is overwhelmed:—in fact, that the body is covered, as the

sea-coast is covered by the full tide. This, we are confident, indeed, is the meaning which he designed to convey, as it appears also to be the idea most naturally suggested by his language. Now, when the Greeks bathed in a standing posture, beside the λουτήρ, having water out of that vessel poured upon them by the attendant παραχύτης, as has been incontestably evinced from the representations on the ancient vases, we would gladly be informed how large an affusion would have sufficed for *covering their bodies*, so as to exemplify the modern Baptist signification of the verb. The sculptured testimonies, happily preserved from the wreck of time, exhibit, in the Grecian bath, the pouring of water on the body, but no immersion of the body in water; they present from real life the details of cold and warm bathing, but no covering of the body with water. It is not then matter of fact, though Dr. Carson has stated it in strong and unequivocal terms, “that immersion is almost always the way of bathing.” It may be so in our own age and country, and if this furnished the standard of comparison, no doubt his cause would be triumphant. But, in regard to the baths of the ancient Greeks, his statement utterly fails, and failing in that quarter, it is nothing to his purpose. The Grecian bath, and not the Irish or British, must determine the application of λούω.

The common practice in Greece is incidentally, though very strikingly, referred to by Plutarch, in his Ethical Treatise against Colotes. After stating that you may see some persons using the warm bath, others the cold, he adds,—Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ψυχρὸν, οἱ δὲ θερμὸν ἐπιβάλλειν

κελευούσι,—“ For some give orders to apply it cold, others hot.” The force of ἐπιβάλλειν strongly corroborates the views which we advocate, and indeed constitutes an independent attestation. It appears to be borrowed from the ordinary mode of administering the bath, by pouring water upon the person. The prevailing practice has become as it were ingrained in the Greek language; and, accordingly, the term employed by Plutarch instantly calls up before our minds a lively portraiture of the παραχύτης, dashing or pouring the water upon the parties who surrounded the λουτήρ. The value of this testimony is greatly enhanced by its exact correspondence with the representations on the Greek vases, thus supplying one of those undesigned coincidences, which carry conviction to the candid mind, in a manner equally pleasing and impressive.

In the preceding statements and illustrations will be found, we apprehend, irresistible proof that the ordinary system of bathing, prevalent in ancient Greece, knew no immersion, and embraced no covering of the body with water. We are now prepared for tracing the connection of these interesting facts with the application of λούω, and its derivatives in the later Greek, not without ulterior regard to their import in the diction of the New Testament. It might be supposed, on a cursory view of the circumstances, that having adduced evidence of the classical usage of these terms, we have merely to transplant that meaning from Athens to Alexandria or Jerusalem. The λούω of Greece, it may be hastily concluded, is the λούω of Judea and Asia Minor. There is a principle, however, involved in this

summary procedure, which must be narrowly scanned, before it is entitled to adoption ; for it were unworthy of the cause of truth, to gloze over any difficulty, with the view of securing a temporary triumph.

We know that after the subjugation of Greece by the arms of Rome, in due time many of the manners and customs of the victors were adopted or imitated by the vanquished. The change, we may easily imagine, was slow and gradual, owing to the embittered feelings generated in the mind of the Greek, by the sacrifice of his ancient liberties. Still there may have been points in which the manners of “the mistress of the world” could claim a decided superiority ; and in regard to these the glitter of power, combined with intrinsic excellence, could not fail to present to the more opulent Grecian cities, an irresistible attraction. The remark applies to the Roman baths, especially as they flourished under imperial patronage. It is an ascertained fact, that before the time of Lucian, who died A.D. 180, the bath of ancient Greece had been superseded by the bath of Italy, at least among those whose means enabled them to ape the luxuries of the conqueror. Accordingly, the statements of this author, respecting the facilities provided, in his day, for securing personal cleanliness, exhibit to us not the bath of the Greek vases, but *that* of imperial Rome, in which immersion acted a more conspicuous part. Still it is highly improbable that, over the country at large, the new mode of ablution would extensively prevail, particularly as the apparatus which it required, involved considerable expense.

Again, independently of this historical fact, the mere



adoption of the Greek language by the Jews, at whatever period that literary revolution occurred, could have produced no very extensive change in their own peculiar habits and practices. This remark naturally restricts itself to the Jews resident in Palestine, or in any other country, where their numbers may have been so great as to secure for their own customs unrestrained prevalence; for, where they formed the minority of the population, as in Greece or Egypt, such ablutions as were not of a religious character, would be almost necessarily modified by the practice of the people among whom they sojourned. The native of Palestine would not, indeed, perpetrate the folly of altering his mode of bathing, in order merely to conform it to the language which constituted the new vehicle of thought. On the contrary, whether his person were washed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, that process would be simply denoted by the term which the Greek language employed for bathing. That a people may alter, or abandon wholly, some particular custom, we do not deny; but their conduct, in that case, is dictated by the relations which the custom sustains, not to language, but to convenience, comfort, or necessary accommodation to the usages of those with whom they may come into contact. Such changes are founded in reason, not in speech. The reader may be reminded, however, that the New Testament usage of *λούω*, and its derivatives, is not entirely controlled by the mode of Jewish ablutions. When these terms refer to legal purifications, we naturally look for some connection, more or less remote, with the Mosaic ritual; but when the allusion is to bathing in

general, ancient Greece will be found the more frequent and fruitful source of illustration. To any one fully acquainted with the Apostolic *Epistles*, which are chiefly concerned with the usage in question, it will be unnecessary to waste a word in proving, that the sacred writers have drawn copiously from the fountain of Grecian manners and customs. Of this state of things, the early progress of the gospel in Greece and Asia Minor, coupled with the education of the most laborious and honoured of the apostles, furnishes an adequate account.

It may be instructive to contemplate the practice of ancient Egypt, which has been partially brought to light by modern investigation. The mode of bathing in that country, so far as it has been ascertained, stands opposed to the exegesis of those who understand λούω commonly to imply immersion. When Greek struck its roots in the land of the Pharaoh's, the λούω of Greece would of necessity denote the *bathing* of Egypt; and by recent discoveries, we are furnished with proof as unexpected as it is conclusive, that this bathing was performed by affusion. Among the paintings in an ancient tomb at Thebes, is one containing the representation of a lady enjoying the luxury of the bath, and attended by four domestic servants. The precious relic of former art is thus described by Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, in his elaborate work on *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. III., p. 388:—"One [attendant] removes the jewellery and clothes she has taken off, or suspends them to a stand in the apartment; another *pours water from a vase over her head*, as the third rubs her arms and

body with her open hands; and a fourth, seated near her, holds a sweet scented flower to her nose, and supports her as she sits [on a mat or carpet]. The same subject," Wilkinson adds, "is treated nearly in the same manner, on some of the Greek vases, *the water being poured over the bather*, who kneels, or is seated on the ground."

This testimony, though a solitary one, appears obviously to preserve, as if embalmed by Egyptian art, the prevailing custom, at least, among the middle and upper classes; and its pre-eminent value partly consists in the remarkable circumstance, that it identifies the mode of bathing in Egypt, with that of ancient Greece. In both countries, affusion, or pouring, was largely the practice; and hence *λούω*, when transferred to Alexandria, required no modification, in order to adapt its meaning to a new usage. But it will be asked, what has Egypt to do with the diction or allusions of the New Testament? We reply, by pointing to the earliest Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the influence which it confessedly exerted on the language of evangelists and apostles. The translators of the Septuagint would naturally adopt the common or accredited sense of the verb,—a sense which the custom of the country does not seem to have associated with the act of immersion. And thus we trace, through varied influences, another interesting link in the chain of evidence, which vindicates for *λούω*, and its derivatives, the *practical* freedom, of which Dr. Carson would rob them by implication. Will it still be argued, that dipping is indirectly countenanced by the use of these terms, in relation to

the ordinance of baptism? The argument, we feel satisfied, will not be taken for more than it is worth by those who have studied the subject, by comparing the classics of Greece with the brighter disclosures of her monuments of antiquity, and by investigating the connection between *custom* and *language*, in the birth-place of the Septuagint translation. This course of research will convince those who prosecute it, that their understandings are trifled with, and that speech is abused, when *pouring water on the bather*, the mode practised in the public baths of Greece, is referred to as merely *a possible way of bathing*. Yet the view we combat will not be without weight among those who are accustomed to substitute analogies, ignorantly borrowed from the habits of our own age and country, for an examination of the real facts and evidences, as they are presented on the page, or preserved in the artistic memorials, of remote antiquity. A careful, and not very limited inquiry into the subject, has guided us to the deliberate conclusion, that the classical and scriptural relations of βαπτίζω with λούω, bring no contribution to the alleged modal signification of the former.

From the Septuagint use of λουτήρ, some assistance may be derived in ascertaining the principal applications of its primitive and cognates. This term we find employed in Exod. xxx. 18, 19, to denote the brazen laver which Moses, by divine direction, constructed, and placed in the tabernacle, for purposes of ritual purification. Were Dr. Carson's theory to direct our judgment, we should unquestionably conclude, that the λουτήρ was so designated, because the priests' hands and feet were



*bathed therein*, thus suggesting, as the obvious inference, that the ablution was performed by immersion. Such, however, was not the fact : for the literal rendering of the *nineteenth* verse from the Greek is,—“ And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet with water —ἐξ αὐτοῦ—*out of it.*” The practice, according to the Septuagint, clearly was to perform the prescribed washings with water, drawn from the laver, into some smaller vessel. This view, we hold to be in strict correspondence with the meaning of the original Hebrew ; nor are we greatly disturbed by the different representation, for which Dr. Geddes and some others contend, on the alleged authority of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The question before us, it should be observed, is not, what is the correct interpretation of the Original?—but the question is, What are we to regard as the true application of the term in the Septuagint? Now, according to that translation, not only is λουτήρ the name of a vessel, in which there was to be no dipping or immersion of the objects to be washed ; but it is surrounded with a context, which distinctly negatives all idea even of implied dipping or immersion. The vessel is called λουτήρ, simply because it contains the water requisite for the enjoined purifications ; while the passage explicitly informs us that the hands and feet of the priests, instead of being plunged into it, were washed with water taken out of it. They may have been immersed in another vessel, or, as was more customary among the Jews, they may have been cleansed by pouring the water upon them, or the operation may have been accomplished in some way now unknown. But of this we are certain,

that here is an occurrence of *λουτήξ*, with a sense corresponding substantively to the Greek mode of bathing, as exhibited on the ancient vases,—the washing, whether total or partial, being performed not in the bathing-vessel, but with water supplied from its ample store.

The extensive prevalence of immersion-bathing among the Orientals has been considered highly improbable, on account of the general scarcity of water, and the consequent necessity of using it with the strictest regard to economy. Our knowledge of the East, it is urged, whether relating to the days of Abraham, or fixing upon the fulness of the times, teaches us that water was precious, in the same sense as “the word of the Lord was precious” in the days of Eli. It is further stated, that a considerable saving of water would be manifestly effected, by substituting the system of pouring for that of immersion. We merely suggest these considerations, however, as the groundwork of a presumptive argument, which has been regarded more or less forcible, leaving its value to be estimated by every candid inquirer.

Having already dwelt at considerable length on the meaning and various applications of *λούω*, we shall only stop to exemplify its construction from the Septuagint, and to notice the use of its derivative *λοῦτρον*, by one of the fathers of the Christian Church. In Ezek. xvi. 9, where we encounter one of the singularly bold and impressive personifications of this prophet, God is introduced, as thus addressing his ancient church:—“I washed thee *with water*—*ἐλούσά σε ἐν ὕδατι*—and anointed

thee *with oil*—ἐν εἰλαίῳ.” In this example, the parallelism of structure is highly important. The anointing *with oil*, and the washing *with water*, are presented to us without the slightest alteration in syntax. In both cases, too, the circumstances are such as to conspire with the construction in upholding the idea of pouring or affusion, as at once the most probable, and the most appropriate. Nor can it be objected, with any shadow of reason, that the specific meaning of λούω is independent of the probabilities which may arise for or against a particular mode of application. President Beecher has adduced two striking instances of λούτρον, the latter of which we select, as illustrating the usage of this term in the hands of one of the leading Christian fathers. “Basil,” he observes, “applies the term λούτρον to a clinic baptism, by sprinkling or affusion. The praetor Ariantheus, converted by his wife, was also baptized by her on his dying bed. Of this Basil says, letter 386—‘He washed away all the stains of his soul at the close of his life, by the washing of regeneration,—λούτρον παλιγγενέσιαις.’ There was no bathing or immersion; but sprinkling or affusion.” The example requires little comment, beyond the brief remark of Mr. Beecher. That the use of λούτρον, in this patristic testimony, is neither unwarrantable, nor even singular, will be manifest to all who attend to the evidence we have brought forward, respecting the ablutions of ancient Greece and Egypt.

Let us now glance at the general result, in order to pave the way for our farther progress. When the Greek language was purest and most influential, we

have seen that the practical application of *λούω* involved no immersion. On the contrary, an unexceptionable certificate, in favour of pouring or affusion, is given by the *Demosia*, or public baths of Greece. That different ablutions were performed in the same manner by the Jewish people, is matter of history, while the operation is denoted in Greek by the same comprehensive term. In the ordinary washing of the hands, for instance, an attendant *poured water* upon them, as is evident from 2 Kings iii. 11,—a passage which Dr. Gale has violently, though vainly, laboured to explain away. In fact, the Greek term for bathing, in the estimation of Dr. Carson himself, is too generic to *denote* immersion; and, according to our view, which is sustained by decisive testimonies, its *ordinary* usage did not embrace mode, even by implication.

We may now advantageously revert to 2 Kings v. 10, 14, the passage which gave rise to the preceding discussion. On these verses, Dr. Halley supplies the following comment.—“ ‘Naaman went down and baptized himself seven times in Jordan.’ Dr. Carson says he dipped himself; his opponents say, because, according to the law of his purification, the leper was to be sprinkled seven times,—he sprinkled himself. Agreeing as I do with Dr. Carson, for the Mosaic law of the leper is inapplicable in this instance, I can see nothing in the passage to determine the sense of the word. Prove from other passages that it means to dip, and there is no objection to admit that sense in this verse. Naaman was commanded to *wash*; and to ascertain the meaning of the word ‘baptize,’ we must look elsewhere, for there



is nothing to expound it in the clause, ‘he baptized himself seven times in Jordan.’ Let baptize mean to dip, or to sprinkle, or to purify, or to do any thing in Jordan,—this verse will not explain it.”—p. 480.

The passage is very fully, and, in some respects, ably discussed by Mr. Godwin; but his argumentative process is, in our judgment, vitiated by its reference to the Mosaic law of purification from leprosy, which we cannot reasonably suppose to have influenced the prescription of the prophet, or the obedience of the Assyrian General. From this occurrence of the verb βαπτίζω, no independent evidence can be extracted in support of any mode of baptism; and hence it is competent for us merely to dispose of the case, by such considerations of probability as are suggested by the known facts and circumstances. We offer the following remarks:—

1. It seems not unreasonable to conclude, that the washing enjoined by the prophet was partial. That the leprosy of Naaman was not universal, but confined to some part of his person, we learn from the eleventh verse, which announces his expectation that Elisha “would strike his hand upon *the place*, and recover the leper.” The direction, therefore, without specification, would be naturally understood to apply only to the part affected. “The man of God” was consulted respecting a certain *local* disease, and on principles of reason and common-sense, the remedy he prescribed—the washing he commanded—would be limited to the seat of the disease. There appears to be nothing either in the nature of the case, or the laws of language, to forbid this interpretation. Again, when Naaman consented to

avail himself of the remedy, we should also be prepared to expect that he resorted to a local baptism, for the purpose of washing away a local leprosy. These probabilities, to which Dr. Wall is disposed to attach considerable weight, we submit, with all sincerity, to the judgment of the candid reader.

2. It is evident that both the prophet and his haughty patient had in view the same important object, whatever may be thought of the mode of its accomplishment. Elisha's command was, "wash, and be clean;" the solicitude of Naaman was fixed on the same desirable consummation. With neither was mode of the slightest moment: only some application of water was contemplated, as indispensable to the cleansing of the leper. Hence the washing, prescribed by divine authority, could have been adequately performed in any of the modes which characterize the practice of common or ceremonial ablution. Immersion, affusion, sprinkling, would have equally served the purpose, the blessed result not being tied to any particular mode. Circumstances of this nature, it may be alleged, are not to be regarded as evidence, and cannot, therefore, be justly permitted to exercise the privilege of determining the sense of *λούω* or *βαπτίζω*. We readily allow that they are insufficient either to establish or disprove the modal signification of the latter verb; still we cannot admit them to be unimportant, inasmuch as they show the way to be perfectly open, in this example, for that latitude of meaning, which we maintain to be the birthright of *βαπτίζω*. Its connexion does not limit it to mode, and the less restricted sense appears, in the light of the preceding

considerations, happily consistent with the doctrine taught in these pages, and sustained by the liberal admissions of such Baptist writers as Drs. Gale and Cox. How far a similar latitude may or may not distinguish the mode of Christian baptism, we shall have opportunity, in the course of our investigations, of inquiring.

3. The difference which our opponents trace between *λούω* and *βαπτίζω*, in this passage, is not countenanced by ancient authorities. Dr. Boothroyd considers the corresponding terms in the Hebrew to be “synonymous,” but he has entered into no explanation or defence of his view. The Chaldee Targum marks no distinction whatever between the verbs, *ܠܒܠ* being adopted as their common rendering. Now, whether this term implies, in all cases, immersion, or may be used for washing in general, (See Buxt. Lex. Chald. Talmud. et Rabbin.) the evidence presented is equally suitable to our purpose. For whatever may be its accredited sense, the use of the same word, for both verbs, proves that the Targumist saw no obvious difference, whether he founded his paraphrase on the Hebrew or on the Septuagint. The same absence of distinction, in regard to the meaning of these terms, marks the translation of the passage in the ancient Syriac version. This venerable witness sustains the principle acknowledged by the Chaldee, in the adoption of a common term, to represent both the command and the act of obedience; but its testimony embraces another point of considerable value, in relation to our ulterior object. The Syriac verb is *ܠܒܠ*, and it denotes washing in

general, entirely irrespective of mode, as we shall briefly evince by examples. Acts ix. 37, "Whom when they had *washed*, they laid her in an upper chamber." Acts xvi. 33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and *washed* their stripes." Heb. x. 22, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." With the ablutions referred to in these passages, it is evident that mode had no particular concern.

Another independent testimony, to the same effect, we have in the *Vulgate*, translated by Jerome, one of the most learned of the Christian fathers. The prophet, according to this authority, commanded the Syrian General—"lavare septies in Jordane"—to *wash* seven times in Jordan; and, in obedience to the command,—"*lavit septies in Jordane*,"—he *washed* seven times in Jordan.

The evidence of usage, presented by these ancient testimonies, we should feel it to be our duty fairly and candidly to estimate. Rejecting, as false, the principle that interchangeable terms are necessarily synonymous, we must not, on the other hand, forget that such terms do not necessarily differ in signification. The fact that one may be substituted for the other, without destroying, or even impairing, the meaning of a proposition, proves at least that they are characterized by an intimate mutual affinity. But in the case before us, the evidence is fitted to carry the mind somewhat farther. That the *Septuagint* version influenced, to a considerable extent, the renderings of the *Syriac* and *Vulgate*, will not be hastily called in question. Now, the translators of these



two latter versions, having to all appearance no purpose to serve but that of truth, did not hesitate, in regard to this passage, to identify the sense of λούω with that of βαπτίζω. It will not, we presume, be insinuated that in either case the renderings were dictated by ignorance, or influenced by loose and inaccurate conceptions of the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew. The character of Jerome, and that of the Syriac version are sufficient, in the view of every competent judge, to shield them from so unmerited an imputation. If, then, we have reason for recognising in these versions, not the violation, but the reflection of the *usus loquendi* of the periods in which they were severally executed, their testimony should inculcate on all a lesson of controversial humility. It is to usage that we uniformly attach the highest importance, satisfied that etymologies, however philosophically traced, and general theories of language, however well constructed and beautiful, when opposed to usage, “are less than nothing and vanity.” Such considerations will not obtain a fair hearing from the man who lays it down as a doctrine, fixed and unalterable, that in all its occurrences βαπτίζω denotes dip, and nothing but dip. Those, again, who regard the meaning of the verb as an open question,—who take for their motto,—“Adhuc sub iudice lis est,”—will receive and weigh, with deliberate attention, the testimony borne by the ancient versions of Scripture. But in whatever manner this particular instance may be disposed of, we respectfully submit, that, in the estimation of those who enter into the details of the Greek system of bathing, the cause of immersion will not be served by the application of

λούω, and its derivatives, to the ordinance of Christian baptism.

The only additional occurrence of βαπτίζω, in the Septuagint, is found in Isaiah xxi. 4, where it is used with a tropical acceptation. In this verse, instead of the clause,—“Fearfulness hath affrighted me,” the Greek has—ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει,—“Iniquity baptizes me.” The passage does not admit of extended discussion. “Iniquity sinks me *in misery*,”—is Dr. Carson’s proposed rendering, his preconceived views supplying at once the required regimen. “Iniquity overwhelms me,” is the translation adopted by Professor Stuart, and by Drs. Halley and Gale, the view of the last mentioned, in this instance, involving him in a virtual abandonment of the exclusively modal sense of βαπτίζω. Mr. Godwin says, “There is [in the passage] no reference to dipping, nothing even to suggest the idea; but its common classic sense, when applied to mind, *to press down*, or *overwhelm*, is exactly suited to it; all the evidence coincides with this conclusion.” A similar interpretation is supported by Edward Williams, in his *Antipædobaptism Examined*, a work of varied learning, and extensive critical research. Having adduced from Scripture a number of examples, in order to prove that *pouring out* is the common expression, figuratively appropriated to the inflictions of divine anger, and having argued from Mat. iii. 11, compared with Acts xi. 15, 16, that a heavenly communication, of a beneficent or merciful nature, is explicitly styled a *baptism*, this writer arrives at the following conclusion, which we give in his own words.—“If the pouring out of God’s

*merciful* influence be properly called baptizing with that influence, for the like reason it must be equally proper to call the *POURING OUT* of his *punitory* and avenging influence, a *baptizing* with that influence. Whereas, for iniquity, or vengeance, to *plunge* the offender *into a something not expressed*, as the contrary opinion supposes, is an idea equally inelegant, confused, and unusual in the sacred writings.”—Vol. II., p. 48. The analogical argument thus traced appears to possess some force ; but this is one of those occurrences of the verb which confessedly cannot prove their own meaning, while a little ingenuity is sufficient to elicit from them the favourite sense of any philological theorist. From the nature of the case, the character of the construction, and the views we have already established regarding βαπτίζω, we conceive it to be abundantly manifest that the idea of *overwhelming*, not that of *dipping*, constitutes the foundation of this bold figure.

EVIDENCE FROM THE APOCRYPHA.—The evidence to be gleaned from the Apocryphal books is equally scanty with that furnished by the Septuagint, the examples in each collection being two in number. The first of these we find in Judith xii. 7, “ And she went out every night to the valley of Bethulia,—Καὶ ἐβαπτίζετο ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος,—and *baptized herself* in the camp at the fountain of water.” This is adduced by Stuart, as an occurrence of the verb, in the sense of washing or cleansing ; and he accordingly renders the clause,—“ She washed herself in the camp.” The unseemliness of a lady submitting to nightly immersion

in the midst of a camp, and at the fountain from which, it is considered probable, an army derived its supply of water, has staggered most interpreters, and even tested the nerve of the majority of controversialists. But to the mind of Dr. Carson, the case presents no difficulty, and he is fully convinced that “the most scrupulous and even romantic delicacy is provided for in the retirement of a lady in a fountain in a valley.” On the other side, observes Dr. Halley,—“To me her bathing in such a situation is about as incredible as is her cutting off the head of Holofernes, or the other incidents of this most ridiculous tale, in which no attention whatever seems to be paid to the verisimilitude of the narrative. Whatever others may be able to do, I can learn nothing from such a use of the word.”—p. 481. Still it must be observed that, whether true or false, the narrative represents a certain action, as having been performed by Judith; and the question demanding solution is, what was the exact nature of that action. It is an undoubted instance of immersion, and nothing but immersion, argues Dr. Carson. On what ground? Simply because the verb βαπτίζω is alleged to have this meaning, and no other. This forms the Alpha and the Omega of all his reasoning upon the subject. Upon this unqualified dogma, he falls back in every case of obscurity or emergency, even while gravely engaged in the examination of his witnesses. This evidence, he avers, must be of a certain stamp, *because* all the evidence is so, thus constraining an individual witness to adopt and give forth, as his own, the testimony of the multitude. “Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the



king *with one mouth* ; let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." In the inductive process requisite for establishing the sense of a word, our assertion of its meaning, in the language generally, should not be permitted to outstrip the instances and evidence adduced ; for it must be manifest to every tyro in exegesis, that, in such a process, to stretch out preceding proof, so as to cover a new and disputed occurrence, is of the very essence of assumption. If we have shown, in ninety-nine cases, that a word has a certain signification, that fact, however strong, will not warrant us to conclude, without examination, and perhaps in the face of difficulties, that the hundredth occurrence of the word presents no variety of meaning. Even were the sense, so numerously attested, admissible in the new instance, there may yet be circumstances demanding a different shade of thought, as is frequently exemplified in the changes which terms imperceptibly undergo in the history of language.

Our objection, however, is not confined to the use which Dr. Carson makes of a general dogma to control the meaning of the examples along the whole line of his inductive process. We challenge the correctness of the dogma itself. In opposition to his theory, we affirm that the modal sense of βαπτίζω is not proved " by the authority of the whole consent of Greek literature." Of a different application, we have already produced from the classics a number of instances, and in the sequel we shall find New Testament and Patristic Greek furnishing occurrences, that are utterly irreconcilable

with Dr. Carson's interpretation. In the meantime, we notice that the construction of this example affords him no aid, as Judith baptized herself, not *in* the fountain, but *at* the fountain of Bethulia. Had the preposition ἐν or εἰς been employed, instead of ἐπί, the advocates of immersion would have laid much stress on the construction; and unquestionably if the writer had intended to represent this Jewish lady as plunging into the fountain, he would have employed language calculated to convey that idea. We do not agree with Mr. Ewing, that immersion could not have been performed at a spring or fountain; but convinced that that act is not at all necessitated by the use of βαπτίζω, and holding it to be opposed to all the surrounding circumstances, physical as well as moral, we contend that the record, whether fact or fiction, does not necessarily bind Judith to the plunge-bath, in performing her nightly ablution. This exposition is supported by the ancient Syriac, which renders the verb by a term signifying, in general, to *wash*, and on the evidence of which, regarding a point of greater moment, we shall have some remarks to offer, when we come to discuss the baptismal commission.

The remaining Apocryphal passage is found in the *Wisdom of Sirach* xxxi. 25, (30,) “When one is—βαπτίζόμενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ—*baptized from a dead body*, and touches it again, of what avail is—τῷ λουτρῷ—his washing?” In this passage many writers believe they have detected an unquestionable proof that baptism is synonymous with purification. To dip from a dead body, they naturally contend, is unmeaning or absurd;

but to purify from a dead body is held to be manifestly indicative of the procedure which, in cases of this nature, the Mosaic ritual enjoined. From Numbers xix. 13, 19, it appears that the process of ceremonial cleansing embraced both sprinkling and bathing, as equally indispensable. Now, as the entire process is styled, in Scripture, purification, and as βαπτίζόμενος seems to denote that process, it is maintained that a foundation is thus laid for identifying *baptize* with *purify*. Others, again, including Dr. Wall and Mr. Williams, contend that this baptism points mainly, if not exclusively, to the practice of sprinkling upon the unclean person the water of separation, because the Mosaic law regarded such sprinkling as at least the most essential part of the prescribed purification. Dr. Wall intimates, that if there were a washing, in addition to the sprinkling, βαπτίζόμενος will include both ; and Dr. Gale admits that at one period he considered this participle to have an especial reference to sprinkling. Mr. Williams proceeds so far as to exclude immersion altogether from the rites appointed for removing the ceremonial defilement ; but a careful and candid examination of the passage in Numbers, will prove him to be incorrect in this view.

It may be thought more difficult to show cause for not accepting, in this passage, *purification* as the synonyme of *baptism*. On a first inspection, the case seems strong for President Beecher, and the entire class of purifiers, who certainly occupy a respectable position in the baptismal controversy. But whatever may be its apparent strength, we apprehend it labours under the

fatal defect of want of evidence. We are able to produce what we conceive to be decisive instances of the use of βαπτίζω, where there is and can be no immersion; but never, even in a solitary instance, have we encountered it in the sense of purification. That meaning, as it appears to us, cannot be extracted from the verb, without recourse to questionable analogies and reasonings, which betray a larger measure of theological ingenuity than of philological acumen. The case on behalf of purification, we think, therefore, might be equitably disposed of by the Scottish verdict of “not proven,”—thus leaving the way perfectly open for the reception of any new evidence, which its advocates may have it in their power to bring forward. That their writings contain some striking illustrations, of the sense for which they contend, is freely admitted; but we are not aware that they have hitherto succeeded in *proving*, by clear examples, the existence of that sense, and thus constructing a legitimate basis for their illustrations.

We have been led to view the question in a considerably different light. Purification, in our judgment, is not baptism; though it may be, and often is, the immediate result of baptism. A contrary result, however, far from being impracticable, we find occasionally exemplified, as in *Aquila's* translation of Job x. 31, Ἐν διαφθορᾷ βαπτίζεις με, “Thou baptizest me in corruption.” One such instance, even apart from the obvious nature of the case, proves that the result will be defilement or purification, according to the character of the baptizing element. Consequently, if we would avoid the absurdity



of attaching opposite meanings to the same term, we must employ the verb to denote simply the *process*, without including the *result*, which is necessarily implied in purification. With this distinction, the usage of the Greek language appears to be strictly harmonious. Whether the baptizing element overwhelms its object, or simply opens to receive it, or presents any other variety of application, a certain process takes, which may issue in great diversity of result, the result to be collected from the context or the general circumstances of each occurrence. Now, the question arising on the passage before us is, What process did the writer design to indicate by the expression, *baptism from a dead body*? If we rest the answer on the historical basis furnished in the book of Numbers, we should say that sprinkling and bathing were combined in this ceremonial baptism. As this answer, however, may be misunderstood, it is requisite to add a word of explanation. The baptism, then, we observe, may include the entire cleansing process enjoined in the Mosaic law, without involving the false principle that the verb *denotes* the two distinct acts of sprinkling and bathing. Such a double sense would be utterly incompatible with the universally admitted laws of language. On the condition already specified, the verb must refer generically to the process of applying water for the purpose of cleansing, while the details of the process demand the use of other terms, by which they may be appropriately designated. The man is baptized from a dead body,—that is, water is employed for his cleansing; but the mere baptism does not inform us of the manner of application. That information we

derive from the law, in this case made and provided, which exhibits the process in detail. And that this ceremonial baptism includes all the use of water, which the law demanded, seems manifest from the conclusion of the verse, where the writer asks, “Of what avail is his washing?” The baptism and the washing are not indeed strictly synonymous,—still both comprehend, though under different aspects, the entire process of this ritual cleansing. This view is sustained by the judgment of Schleusner, in his Lexicon to the Septuagint, who renders the words—βαπτίζόμενος ἀπὸ νεκρῶν,—*qui abluit se a mortuo*; and also by Robinson: and what is of more importance, the construction, and all the circumstances, historical and ceremonial, are favourable to it, while the opposing evidence consists in the pertinacious assertion of the exclusively modal sense of βαπτίζω.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

### JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM.

ALLEGED RELATION OF PROSELYTE BAPTISM BY THE JEWS TO CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.—PRIORITY OF THE JEWISH RITE ADVOCATED BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS, PARTICULARLY BY SOME OF THE LEADING ORIENTALISTS.—TESTIMONY OF THE TALMUD, AND OTHER RABBINICAL WRITINGS.—LATER ORIGIN OF THE BAPTISM OF PROSELYTES THE DOCTRINE OF CARPZOV, LARDNER, AND OTHERS.—AMOUNT OF SUPPORT IT DERIVES FROM THE STATE OF THE EVIDENCE.—ESTIMATE OF THE COMPARATIVE SOUNDNESS OF THESE OPPOSING VIEWS, IN A SERIES OF CONNECTED OBSERVATIONS.—1. THE PRIOR EXISTENCE OF THE RITE HAS NOT A CLEAR HISTORICAL BASIS.—2. YET ITS OBSERVANCE PRECEDED THE DATE OF THE EVIDENCE ON ITS BEHALF, BY SOME CONSIDERABLE PERIOD.—3. JEWISH WRITERS ASSERT THAT IT AROSE BEFORE THE DAYS OF OUR SAVIOUR.—4. THE SILENCE OF SOME ANCIENT AUTHORS HAS EXERCISED TOO MUCH INFLUENCE AGAINST THE IDEA OF ITS *EARLY ORIGIN*,—5, WHICH APPEARS TO BE IMPLIED IN VARIOUS PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—6. REMARKS ON THE *MODE* OF JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM.

HAVING reviewed the Septuagint and Apocryphal testimonies, it may be desirable, before we canvass the evidence supplied by the New Testament, to consider briefly the unsettled and somewhat intricate topic of Jewish proselyte baptism. Many have supposed this observance, whatever may have been the mode of its administration, to sustain a sort of parental relation to

the ordinance of Christian baptism. This view is, of course, founded on the fact or assumption, that baptism formed part of the ritual imposed on a proselyte to Judaism, prior to the introduction of Christianity. "It is evident," observes Dr. Wall, "that the custom of the Jews before our Saviour's time (and, as they themselves affirm, from the beginning of their law) was to baptize, as well as circumcise, any proselyte that came over to them from the nations. This does fully appear both from the books of the Jews themselves, and also of others that understood the Jewish customs, and have written of them. They reckoned all mankind, beside themselves, to be in an unclean state, and not capable of being entered into the covenant of Israelites, without a washing or baptism, to denote their purification from their uncleanness. And this was called the baptizing of them unto Moses."—*History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. I., p. 4.

This extract may be regarded as conveying the sentiments entertained by the majority of critics and theologians, both the older and more recent. The antiquity of proselyte baptism can produce the suffrages of some of the most distinguished Orientalists and Rabbinical scholars, as Lightfoot, Schoettgen, Selden, Ainsworth, Danz, Buxtorf, Michaelis, Hammond, and many others. Among the numerous writers, of a more recent date, whose investigations have conducted them to a similar conclusion, may be mentioned the names of Kuinöl, E. G. Bengel, Neander, Gieseler, Matthies, Dr. Halley, and Dr. Alexander in Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*. The direct evidence, in support of the antiquity of proselyte



baptism, we derive chiefly, as may be anticipated, from the ecclesiastical literature of the Jews, on which industry has been unweariedly employed, though with incommensurate success. The ample tomes of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds have been ransacked, the ceremonies to be observed by proselytes to the Jewish faith nicely scanned, and every particle of testimony, which learned and zealous research could lay hold of, turned to account. To understand the case clearly, it will be necessary to adduce some quotations from Rabbinical authors, though we have no intention, nor is it essential to our object, to enter minutely into details. The substance, indeed, of all the evidence bearing directly and intimately on the subject, might be intelligibly conveyed in a few sentences.

The Babylonian Talmud supplies full and indisputable testimony to proselyte baptism, as a veritable rite, imposed on converts to the Jewish faith. In the *Gemara*, Codex Jevamoth, fol. 46, 2, as cited by Lightfoot, on Mat. iii. 6, we read,—“As to a proselyte, who is circumcised, but not baptized, what of him? Rabbi Eliezer says: ‘Behold he is a proselyte; for thus we find it concerning our fathers, that they were circumcised, but not baptized,’ &c. But the wise men say: ‘Is he baptized, but not circumcised; or, is he circumcised, but not baptized; he is not a proselyte until he is circumcised and baptized.’” Were this the only evidence, it would establish incontestably the fact of the baptism in question; but that it does not touch the *antiquity* of the observance must be admitted, when we reflect that the *Gemara* of the Babylonian Talmud is a

compilation of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. See *Stuart on Baptism*, p. 63.

As the Jerusalem Talmud belongs to an earlier period, its testimony, on this subject, is justly entitled to a higher degree of consideration. The *Gemara*, or *Commentary*, of this collection, which was composed in the latter part of the third century, refers to the case of Roman soldiers on guard at Jerusalem, who are said to have partaken of the passover, having been baptized on the evening of that solemn festival. De Wette has attempted to explain this, as one of the customary Jewish ablutions ; but it is almost universally acknowledged to be an instance of proselyte baptism. The observance of the rite before the close of the third century, we may therefore recognise as credibly attested. We now proceed a step higher. About the year of our Lord 220, the *Mishna*, or *Repetition*, which constitutes the text of Both Talmuds, was composed by Rabbi Jehudah Hakkodesh. According to the Jews, it consists of traditions, which had descended uncorrupt from Moses, and could thus rightfully claim divine authority. "From this work," says Stuart, "which contains such an almost infinite number of Jewish superstitions, usages, and rites, I have, as yet, seen but one passage produced, which seems to have any direct bearing upon our question. It runs thus:—'As to a proselyte, who becomes a proselyte on the evening of the passover, the followers of Shammai say, Let him be baptized (טובל) and let him eat the passover in the evening ; but the disciples of Hillel say, He who separates himself from his uncircumcision, separates himself from a sepulchre.'"—*Tract.*

*Pesah*, Cap. CVIII. § 8. E. G. Bengel, though an advocate for the antiquity of proselyte baptism, strangely enough considers this testimony to be of little or no weight; but Stuart, who is on the opposite side, candidly admits that the reference is to that Jewish observance; and as his view is borne out by the obvious import of the words, we thus trace the existence of the rite up to an early part of the third century. At this stage, however, the plain historical evidence fails us, and the point of a more remote original is chiefly dependent on certain allusive statements, assertions, and probabilities of various character and cogency.

Those who impugn the antiquity of proselyte baptism marshal against it a host of difficulties, supposed to be insurmountable. Had the observance, they argue, obtained in the days of Philo and Josephus, there is a moral certainty that it would not have passed without notice. But these authors, though referring largely to Jewish ceremonies and customs, regard it with profound and ominous silence. The same remark applies to other early witnesses. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, now generally associated with the commencement of the Christian era, know nothing of proselyte baptism. Had it been an established rite of purification for the convert from heathenism, is it probable, is it even possible, that its name should not be once breathed by these Jewish authorities? In view of all the difficulties, several critics and theologians maintain the rise of the observance to have been subsequent to the opening of the Christian dispensation. This hypothesis numbers among its supporters John Owen, Wernsdorf, Carpzov, Lardner,

Ernesti, Paulus, De Wette, Stuart, and Schneckenburger. The last named author has devoted a treatise of considerable ability and research to the elucidation of Jewish proselyte baptism. From the subjoined summary by Stuart, we may understand the views generally advocated by this class of writers, who can certainly muster an imposing array of negative evidence. "We are destitute," says he, "of any early testimony to the practice of proselyte baptism, antecedently to the Christian era. The original institution of admitting Jews to the covenant, and strangers to the same, prescribed no other rite than that of circumcision. No account of any other is found in the Old Testament; none in the Apocrypha, New Testament, Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, Joseph the blind, or in the work of any other Targumist, excepting Pseudo-Jonathan, whose work belongs to the seventh or eighth century. No evidence is found in Philo, Josephus, or any of the earlier Christian writers. How could an allusion to such a rite have escaped them all, if it were as common, and as much required by usage as circumcision?"—*Mode of Baptism*, p. 69.

Having now obtained possession of the opposing views, we are prepared for estimating their comparative soundness. The results may be presented in the following order.—

1. We admit that the existence of Jewish proselyte baptism, as a distinct religious rite, at or prior to the commencement of the Christian era, does not rest on a foundation of clear historical evidence. So far as antiquarian industry has ascertained, it is not mentioned by any



writer, Jewish or Christian, belonging to the first century. Even to the close of the second, any scattered references to it are so few in number, and so vague in character, as to afford ample apology for hesitation. It is only when we travel down to the Rabbinical compositions of the third century, that the observance stands out before us in well defined and unquestionable shape. In this acknowledged state of the evidence, it may be naturally demanded, what good authority we can produce for assigning to proselyte baptism a considerably higher antiquity? *None*, is the emphatic reply of Stuart, who accordingly proceeds to argue, with much zeal and learning, in support of the view which contemplates a later original. We conceive, however, that in his elaborate discussion of the question, great, though unintentional injustice, is done to the important Rabbinical testimonies which he has cited.

That the rite existed in the second or third century is admitted universally, both by the opponents and advocates of a more remote antiquity. Thus far the *Mishna* has made sure of its existence, to the conviction of all parties. But while the documentary evidence puts us in possession of this as a fixed point, it does not thereby exhaust its strength. In the mind of the candid inquirer, it is still sufficiently potent to work indirectly the assurance that an earlier origin is distinctly and indubitably implied.

2. We proceed to show that the age of these testimonies is necessarily later than the commencement of proselyte baptism. Recorded evidence of the observance of any institution, of course, necessitates the

belief, that the institution existed when the record was composed. A Rabbinical work, of the second or third century, notices, for instance, a certain existing mode of receiving into church communion those who were converted to the Jewish faith. If, then, the evidence furnished in that document be indeed credible, its immediate and necessary effect will be to convince us of the existence of that particular mode, as early as the second or third century. But the full force of the testimony may not be expended on the proof of that particular fact. Had the writer described the ceremony as of very recent growth, and still more, had his narrative pointed to it as originating, under his own observation, doubtless, in that case, the document and the observance must have been regarded as nearly coeval. Of a very different stamp, however, are the Rabbinical references to Jewish Proselyte baptism. Even the earliest of these testimonies exhibit the observance as already in operation, thus, in the most emphatic manner, recognising *its* antiquity to be superior to *their own*. Passing by later testimonies, let us advert to the passage cited from the Mishna, which represents the followers of Shammai as enjoining the baptism of a proselyte, in order ritually to qualify him for partaking of the passover. The collection, in which this injunction is found, belongs to the earlier part of the third century; and Jewish tradition informs us, that Rabbi Shammai flourished about forty years before the advent of our Saviour. But apart altogether from the traditionary element, which we admit to be a doubtful commodity, the prior existence of Proselyte baptism is essentially involved in the testi-

mony itself. The compiler of the Mishna found that observance already enrolled on the list of Jewish purifications, and especially supported by the disciples of an influential Rabbi of former times. How long it may have been in existence anterior to the appearance of the Mishna, other evidence is confessedly requisite to determine; but unless the period was considerable, the rite could not easily have obtained a footing in the standard collection of the traditions of the Jewish church. Though not among the advocates of an early original, Mr. Stuart, influenced by analogous views of Rabbinical testimony upon the subject, says,—“The Mishna, certainly for the most part, *only reduces to writing what was before extant in traditions* orally preserved. It is probable, then, that the custom, in a greater or less extent of baptizing proselytes, must have existed in the second century, and possibly still earlier.”

3. The evidence for the existence of Proselyte baptism in the third and subsequent centuries, is usually accompanied with the assertion or assumption, that it preceded the rise of Christianity. In the Talmuds, as we have seen, this observance, by necessary implication, lays claim to an antiquity more venerable than that of any of the testimonies adduced on its behalf. It is older than the Gemara, older than the Mishna. These witnesses attest its operation as an ecclesiastical rite; but they are too young to tell of its origin. They point us to the flowing stream, while they are not *travelled* enough to have reached the distant fountain. Many of them, however, do not hesitate to *affirm*, that the usage of their own day, in regard to proselytes, had

characterized the polity of Judaism during the entire course of its history. "*In all ages*," observes Maimonides, who wrote in the twelfth century, "when a Gentile desires to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice." These views he endeavours to base on Num. xv. 15, as follows:—"As it is written, *As you are, so shall the stranger be*. How are you? By circumcision, and baptism, and bringing a sacrifice. So likewise the stranger (or proselyte) through all generations; by circumcision, and baptism, and bringing a sacrifice." Perhaps the confidence of Maimonides, in the primeval antiquity of Proselyte baptism, is in the inverse ratio of his proximity to its original. At all events, the evidence which preceded, by many centuries, the age of this writer, is generally less explicit and decisive on the principal point at issue. Yet we find the Talmud, *Tract. Repudii*, announcing, with respect to Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, that "he was made a proselyte by circumcision and baptism." Such statements may seem to present an air of extravagance, robbing them to a considerable extent of the power to produce solid conviction. But it will not fail to strike the reflective mind, that in a matter of this nature, Jewish Rabbis most probably would not have hazarded these assertions, if there had not existed among the people a general and deep-rooted persuasion of the antiquity of the rite. It is certain, at least, that in all testimonies of this class, its origin is associated with a period preceding "the fulness of the times;" and the important question



naturally arising is, What amount of credibility do such testimonies legitimately possess? If the alleged practice betray in its character nothing very extraordinary or improbable, and if the affirmation of its high antiquity is met by no opposing testimony, then it would seem altogether unreasonable to withhold our assent. With respect to the former, we confess our inability to discover, in the baptism of proselytes, any incongruity to the spirit and established ritual of the ancient dispensation. On the contrary, we should expect that the economy which imposed on the Israelites themselves so many ceremonial ablutions, would not admit Gentiles to the sacred fellowship of its privileges, without undergoing symbolic purification. Regarding the latter, we observe—

4. That instead of opposing testimony, which cannot be produced, those who reject an early original, are compelled to take their stand mainly on the absence of confirmation, where, as they allege, it might be rationally and even confidently anticipated. If proselyte baptism formed one of the observances of the Jewish Church in the first century of the Christian era, why, it is demanded, do we find in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, no allusion whatever to its existence? Why has Josephus, amid detailed accounts of Jewish sects and peculiarities, left unnoticed a leading rite of initiation into the Church of the Hebrew fathers? To such inquiries, it may not, perhaps, be practicable to furnish a satisfactory answer. Some writers, it is true, have applied the chemistry of criticism to the extraction of evidence, from one or two passages in Josephus; but

the result of the analysis seems to have brought no solid conviction, even to their own minds. The extreme dearth of evidence, in connexion with this early period, is apparent from the fact, that a veteran scholar of De Wette's attainments, has adopted the hypothesis that the Jews borrowed their Proselyte ablution from the ordinance of Christian baptism. Mr. Stuart, Drs. Halley and Alexander, and others, stamp this view as opposed to all probability, on the ground of the implacable hatred which the Jews cherished towards the Christians. But if the baptism of the latter became a popular and attractive observance, might not the Jews, with all their known enmity to Jesus and his followers, have been tempted quietly to appropriate what they deemed to be an instrument of ecclesiastical power and extension? Distinguished for wisdom in their generation, they might, at least, with such an object in view, have invested their own proselyte washing with the name and attributes of baptism? Against the acceptance of De Wette's untenable hypothesis, a more solid argument is suggested by the fact, that, on this subject, the early Christian records prefer against the Jews no charge of a breach of the eighth commandment. Had they, in reality, stolen this rite from the Christians, it is in the highest degree improbable that the *sacrilege* would have been permitted to pass without grave crimination.

To the mere silence of Josephus and the Targumists, however unaccountable it may appear, we should beware of attaching an importance which it does not righteously possess. The absence of testimony should never be confounded with contradictory testimony. We may

consider it very extraordinary that the author of the *Jewish Antiquities*, and of the *Wars of the Jews*, himself a Pharisee, should make no mention of the initiatory ablution imposed on a proselyte to the Jewish faith. But to contend against the existence of the rite in that age, on such slender grounds, and without a particle of positive evidence, would be to occupy a very exposed position. After its institution in Paradise, the Sabbath is not once mentioned in the book of Genesis, though that section of the sacred narrative covers a period of more than 1500 years. Even subsequently to the transaction at Sinai, and after the death of Moses, a similar silence characterizes several centuries of Israelitish history. It is a case still more in point, that in some of the early patristic writings, we discover almost no definite allusions to the ordinance of baptism, though an institution of equal impressiveness, and incalculably more frequent observance. On this point, therefore, we do not feel warranted to attribute much weight to the mere absence of testimony, in certain Jewish documents, nor will the circumstance be likely to weigh with discerning men, unless reinforced by considerations of a positive character.

5. The prior existence of proselyte baptism seems to be evidently implied in different passages of the New Testament. All admit the practice of diverse ablutions by the Jewish people themselves, from the very foundation of their polity. These observances were, by divine authority, incorporated with the national religion, as symbols of the purity required in the true worshippers of God. The Jewish ritual refused to dispense with its

significant washings in the instance of the most pious descendant of Abraham ; and is it to be supposed that a Gentile could enter the hallowed precincts of the covenant, without submitting to some rite of purification ? Had ceremonial washing been utterly disregarded in the circumstances, we should almost consider the neglect as in some degree compromising the character of the Mosaic economy. In accordance with the spirit of this view, the Jewish doctors, as we have seen, identify the origin of proselyte baptism with that of the Mosaic ritual, and apply to the observance such passages as Numbers xv. 15.

Now, the strong presumption thus created, we maintain to be strikingly supported by New Testament evidence. When John the baptist entered upon his public career, as the forerunner of the Messiah, the baptism which he preached and administered appears to have required no explanation. The people saw him engaged in baptizing the multitudes who flocked to his ministrations ; yet on no occasion does any one seem to have regarded baptism as a new or unintelligible ceremonial. No one appears to have sought information respecting the meaning of the rite ; no one proposed the question, What is baptism ? The same observation applies to the kindred ordinance of initiation into the Christian church. The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, whether administered by John or the disciples of Jesus, uniformly appears in the character of a rite, which foes and followers equally comprehended.—Mat. iii. 1, 5, 6, “ In those days came John the baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. \* \* Then went



out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”—John iii. 22, and iv. 1, “ Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized.” “ Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.” No evidence in all this, nor indeed in all the Greek Scriptures, that baptism was regarded by any of the people as a strange thing. How are we to account for this evident acquaintance with the rite, and especially by what means was that acquaintance so universally diffused? This is an embarrassing question for those who deny the early origin of proselyte-baptism; and, so far as we are aware, the best, though a very inadequate, answer from that quarter is thus given by Professor Stuart.—“ That the Jews of our Saviour’s time entertained the idea that he would baptize his disciples, may be well accounted for, without resorting to the supposition that proselyte-baptism was already practised. Let the reader consult Isa. xii. 3, xlv. 3, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, Zech. xiii. 1, and he will easily see how the Jews might have formed an opinion, that the Messiah would baptize his disciples.” An examination of these passages has not, we confess, enabled us to see what this author pronounces to be so easily perceptible. Suppose it practicable for the Jews to have derived from these testimonies the vague expectation that the Messiah, or his forerunner, would receive converts by the washing of baptism, we are still pressed by the question, how was the mind of the nation at large so thoroughly leavened with this expectation? That there existed, at the period, no very

general acquaintance with the predictions respecting Christ's mission, must be conceded by all; and besides, the mass of mankind seldom learn from books the character and object of a positive institution,—it must be presented to their senses in the reality of practical observance. On such grounds, we conclude that some similar rite must have preceded the administration of baptism by John and Jesus; and we have discovered no adequate reason for refusing this station of priority to the rite of Jewish proselyte-baptism. We are aware, in fact, of no other claimant to dispute the title.

A plausible objection to the result thus obtained, Stuart ingeniously derives from the question proposed by the Jewish authorities to John the baptist. John i. 25, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"—"The manner of the question," he observes, "does obviously seem to imply, that they expected himself and his two coadjutors, Elijah and the prophet, to baptize those whom they should receive as disciples. But does this imply that proselyte-baptism was already in use? So it has been thought and said. Yet I cannot see how this follows of necessity. Nay, I must even say that the necessary implication seems to be directly the contrary. What was the *initiatory* rite, which they expected under a dispensation, that even in their own view was to be *new*, and very different in many respects from the former one? Was it to be a new rite, a distinctive sign; or was it to be merely the continuation of an old practice already in common usage? The former surely seems to be the most natural and probable.

Indeed, the manner of the question put to John, absolutely forbids the idea, that those who put it considered baptism as a rite in common use. The necessary implication is, that unless John were either the Messiah, or Elijah, or the prophet, he could have no right to baptize. How could this be said with any good degree of force or congruity, in case the same kind of baptism, which John practised, was a matter of common usage? An appeal to this text, then, serves rather to confirm the opinion opposite to that, for the support of which the appeal is made.”—The reasonings of the learned author, though very specious, appear to harbour a fallacy, which may be easily detected.

(1.) That the priests and Levites, who interrogated John, understood the rite of baptism, is manifest from the form of their question. They did not ask, What is baptism?—but, Why baptizest thou? The question assumes their knowledge of the ordinance, and simply demands John’s authority for its administration.—(2.) It appears to follow necessarily from the very terms of the question, that baptism was not, as Mr. Stuart will have it, a new, or distinctive sign. Had it been so, the priests and Levites must have first inquired into its meaning, as an indispensable preliminary to farther interrogation. Is not this the obvious dictate of common sense?—(3.) It was not the rite itself, but the object coupled with its administration, which awakened Jewish suspicion or curiosity. The question put to John was, Why baptizest thou? But under what circumstances was it put? That the baptism of John contemplated a new economy, was apprehended, not, as

it appears to us, from the novel character of the ordinance, but from the parties to whom it was administered. Had he baptized, in connexion with proselytism to the Jewish faith, his conduct, so far as we can perceive, could not have ruffled the equanimity of the Scribes and Pharisees, simply because it would not have been obnoxious to the charge of injuriously interfering with the Mosaic economy. On the contrary, they must have regarded such baptism and its results in the light of an important contribution to their own ecclesiastical influence. The accession of converts by such a baptism, would have tended only to the aggrandizement of their polity and their party. But the multitudes baptized by John were Jews—"Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,"—and hence the misgiving and alarm of the Jewish authorities. The Pharisees could understand the baptism of Gentiles into the Jewish faith; but what construction were they to put on the baptism of Jews themselves? Did it not savour of a design to subvert or supersede the ancient dispensation? And we are aware of no cause so likely to awaken these apprehensions, as the known character and object of proselyte-baptism. In the hypothesis of its previous existence, we discover a natural and adequate exponent of the motives which prompted the interested zealots for Judaism, to inquire of our Lord's forerunner, "Wherefore baptizest thou?" If you are not Elias, nor Messiah, nor the prophet, by what authority do you administer a rite, which is historically and practically associated with conversion to a new faith, or the introduction of a new dispensation?



These considerations enable us not merely to reconcile the existence of proselyte-baptism with the question proposed to John; but still farther to discover the striking aptitude of that rite to form, in Jewish minds, a painful bond of association between the baptism of John, and the development of a new economy, for which they were wholly unprepared.

6. It remains for us to make a brief statement on the mode of Jewish proselyte-baptism. On this topic, several of the opponents of an exclusive immersion-baptism, appear to us more liberal than judicious in their frank admissions. Professor Stuart affirms it to be "on all hands conceded that, so far as the testimony of the Rabbins can decide such a point, the baptism of proselytes among the Jews was by immersion." In the hands of this author, however, the admission cannot affect the mode of Christian baptism, because he holds the Jewish rite to have sprung up after the commencement of the Christian era. "I feel bound in candor," says Dr. Halley, "to admit that the Jewish baptism of proselytes was by immersion. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt whatever; for, that proselytes were baptized in a confluence of waters, sufficient to cover the whole body, we learn from the Talmuds and from Maimonides." Dr. Halley is right, if the question respected the mode of proselyte-baptism in the *eleventh* century, when Maimonides wrote, or between the *third* and *seventh* centuries, when the Talmuds were compiled. But are these facts sufficient to warrant the inference, that the mode of the rite, during the antecedent period of its history, had undergone no alteration? If Rab-

binical testimony, it may be alleged, is valid in proving the early existence of this ablution at all, it must be accounted equally valid in confining its mode to immersion. We conceive, however, that there is room for a distinction. To our view the evidence of the Rabbis presents the early existence of proselyte-baptism, as *a fixed quantity*, and its mode as *a variable quantity*, sustaining to each other relations similar to those which we are accustomed to trace between Apostolic baptism, and patristic trine-immersion. In the acknowledged absence of positive proof on either side, it is worthy of notice that the Jews were by no means distinguished for the maintenance of the traditional observances of their ritual, in a state of primitive simplicity. The entire system of ceremony “grew mightily” in bulk and complication, under the fostering care of a prolific formalism. In particular, did not the department of *washings*, by continued multiplication and accretion, swell out into a service so operose and burdensome, as to become almost an overmatch for even Pharisaic zeal? It will at least be conceded, that the immersion-baptism of a Jewish proselyte, in the *eleventh* or *third* century, does not necessarily imply the prevalence of a similar mode, prior to the dawn of Christianity; and the probability of change derives countenance from the analogy of Christian baptism, the mode of which is known to have departed from the simplicity of primitive times, and become clogged with observances supplied by a fruitful but perverted ingenuity. That the mode described by Maimonides and the Talmudists, formed an innovation upon ancient

practice, we dare not assert; while, on the other hand, we are prevented by what we deem the strong probabilities of the case, from coinciding with the generous and disinterested admissions of Dr. Halley and Professor Stuart.

On this point, Mr. Godwin has some statements worthy of serious attention, particularly as they appear to extract from the Mosaic law some show of evidence, in favour of sprinkling, as the original mode of proselyte-baptism. "In respect to the manner in which the purification of the proselyte was performed," he says, "it is to be observed that no immersion was enjoined in the law, either public or private. In some cases, the washing of the whole body was required; but this, of course, as decency demanded, was done in private. The purification which was effected by others,—the purification which was observed in public,—consisted of the sprinkling of water by a person who was pure, upon the person to be purified. This is mentioned in the law quoted, and nothing else. The public purification of the proselytes with water was performed by sprinkling, and only thus."—*Christian Baptism*, p. 74.

Mr. Godwin refers to Pocock's *Miscellaneous Notes*, chap. ix., in support of the statement that "the Hebrew equivalent for βαπτισμός is used in the Talmud for the purification (or washing), which was performed by the affusion of water on the hands." If this use of the term were really in evidence, it would demonstrate that so far as the legitimate import of language is concerned, proselyte-baptism may have been administered in early times by sprinkling or affusion. It would, in fact,

strengthen the probabilities, to which we have already alluded, by supplying, to some extent, a philological basis for the argument derived from the ceremonial analogies of Judaism and Christianity. But the statement of Mr. Godwin is not, we fear, borne out by the results of Pocock's Talmudical investigations. That learned Orientalist does not appear to have positively identified baptism with the washing of hands by affusion, though certain occurrences of the term, in Jewish literature and in the New Testament, are regarded by him as highly favourable to that view. But while he does not prove to us the Rabbinical application of the term to a case, in which there was no dipping, his labours go to justify the propriety of withholding assent from the sweeping admission, that in all ages of its history, the baptism of proselytes was administered by immersion. In reference to the Jews themselves, Lightfoot affirms this to have been the mode of baptizing adults, while he pronounces it "difficult to ascertain that their infant children were immersed, though they evidently recognised them as baptized."—The same author, who was not accustomed to trifle with facts and evidence, assures us, "it would be easy to demonstrate, that the sprinkling or affusion of water upon any one was called baptism, no less than the act of dipping or immersion."—*Harmon. Quat. Evang.* Tom. I., fol. p. 449.

Amid the uncertainties which cloud the original of Jewish proselyte baptism, and hover around the mode of its early administration, one point has been happily discovered, with a clearness which leaves upon the mind



no shadow of dubiety. In this initiatory ordinance, whatever may have been its outward form, the adult convert to the faith of Israel, and his infant offspring possessed a common interest. By an elaborate examination of the Jewish testimonies, relating to this branch of the subject, Lightfoot arrived at the following strong conclusion ;—"That the baptizing of infants had been a thing as commonly known, and as commonly used, before John's coming, and to the very time of his coming, as any holy thing that was used among the Jews ; and (that) they were as well acquainted with infants' baptism, as they were with infants' circumcision."—*Harmon. in Joan.* p. 390. In these remarks we, of course, anticipate the second leading topic of discussion ; but they are offered now, with the view to complete, as far as practicable, our brief and hasty sketch of what is known on the subject of Jewish proselyte-baptism.

## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

RESULT OF PRECEDING INQUIRIES HOW RELATED TO THE EVIDENCE FOUND IN THE GREEK SCRIPTURES.—THIS EVIDENCE LESS COPIOUS THAN MIGHT BE ANTICIPATED.—THE REASON ASSIGNED. —TESTIMONIES ARRANGED, AND CANVASSED, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER.—I. OCCURRENCES OF ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ, AND ITS DERIVATIVES, WHICH DO NOT APPLY TO THE ORDINANCE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.—II. OCCURRENCES IN WHICH THESE TERMS DENOTE “THE BAPTISM OF JOHN,” OR OF JESUS, AND THE INTIMATELY RELATED BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.—III. FIGURATIVE APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING STRICTURES ON THE PRINCIPLES AND REASONINGS OF LEADING BAPTIST WRITERS, IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SUCH PASSAGES AS 1 COR. X. 1, 2; AND 1 PETER III. 21, 22.—IV. REFUTATION OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS OF THE IMMERSIONISTS.—V. SUBORDINATION OF MERE MODE TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ORDINANCE, AS INDICATED BY THE EXPRESSION, “BAPTISM INTO THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.”—MAT. XXVIII. 19.

At the threshold of this section of the evidence, the question is reiterated, was there a præestablished usage of βαπτίζω and its derivatives, binding the sacred penmen of the Greek Scriptures to employ these terms, in the exclusive sense of immersion? From the range of Classical literature, embraced in the preceding part of the discussion, we have produced what we hold to be

decisive instances of a different meaning; and, therefore, so far as the question relates to previous usage, we feel warranted to meet it with a direct and unqualified negative. On the remaining point, we deny that, even had the usage of the ancient classics presented unexceptionable uniformity, evangelists and apostles would have been thereby prohibited from varying, to any required amount, the signification of baptism, as the name of a Christian ordinance. To refuse them this liberty were to trench upon a privilege, which authors, in all languages, have occasionally exercised, and recourse to which must have been absolutely indispensable in rendering the tongue of Pagan Greece eloquent of the new revelations of Christianity. We acknowledge, at the same time, that the common, or recognised sense of a term is not to be arbitrarily superseded; and that, in the interpretation of a document, when we assign any peculiar meaning, we are bound to sustain our view by adequate authority. Whether the privilege in question has any bearing on the new Testament acceptance of baptism, may be ascertained, as we proceed with our investigations.

With respect to the character of preceding usage, the examples hitherto canvassed, have, we conceive, abundantly established the fact, that βαπτίζω and *dip* are not, after all, such inseparable friends as one would be led to imagine from the forcible *assertions* of our opponents. In several occurrences, which Baptists eagerly expound as *figures*, but which we are prepared to stand by as *facts*, the verb, with its cognate nouns, relates to cases, the physical circumstances of which

necessarily exclude all idea of immersion. Besides, we found the *practice* of Baptist authors to be marvellously inconsistent with their *assertions*. Scarcely has the oracular announcement, that βαπτίζω denotes *dip*, and *nothing but dip*, escaped their pen, when they quietly adopt some other rendering, which may appear more correct or suitable. Some of their standard writers, we have also seen, proceeding still farther, in the course of their criticisms on one or two obstinate passages, make admissions which are manifestly fatal to the lofty claims of immersion.

While the testimonies from the Greek Classics leave no legitimate room for doubt, that βαπτίζω has a latitude of application, which does not belong to our vernacular *dip*, the same view is strengthened collaterally by the evidence of some of the earliest and most approved versions, such as the *Latin Vulgate*, and the *Peshito Syriac*, and also by the usage of cognate languages. The former we have repeatedly exemplified; and we now produce an interesting illustration of the latter, from the *Epistles* of Caecilius Plinius. This author, who was born in the apostolic age, employs the term *Baptisterium* to denote, not a bath for immersion, but a vessel, or *labrum*, for pouring water on the person of the bather. The instance is most important, as showing that a derivative of βαπτίζω was in an age so early transferred to the Latin language, with a signification entirely different from what some affirm to be its uniform and exclusive meaning.—See Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Art. *Baths*.

New Testament evidence, bearing directly on the



mode of baptism, we may probably discover to be less ample and specific than the superficial reader would surmise. The critical student of language, however, will instantly appreciate the nature and extent of the limitation. When βαπτίζω, or any other verb, is constructed without a regimen, though its meaning is of course exemplified, yet the construction can afford no independent evidence of that meaning. In such cases, the necessary information may be suggested by the context; or from historical connexions, or parallel occurrences in which a regimen exists, we may learn the appropriate sense;—still the proposition holds, that the absence of a regimen expressed, or fairly understood, denudes the term, in any particular occurrence, of the character of an independent testimony. Now, it will be found that, in the Gospels and Epistles, many of the constructions of the verb, and not a few of the related nouns fall under this description; and hence the examples of direct evidence are brought within comparatively narrow limits. The principle involved in these statements is general, and its operation will affect, more or less, every correct process of verbal exposition. In our present inquiries, the recognition of it will lessen considerably the number of passages to be sifted, and, at the same time, necessitate a more thorough examination of those occurrences which furnish the requisite means of ascertaining the signification. The evidence supplied by New Testament usage, may be arranged in the following order.—

I. Occurrences of βαπτίζω, and its derivatives, which do not apply to the ordinance of Christian baptism.

II. Occurrences in which these terms denote “the baptism of John,” or of Jesus, and the intimately related baptism with the Holy Spirit.

III. Figurative applications, including strictures on the principles and reasonings of leading Baptist writers, in the interpretation of such passages as 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; and 1 Peter iii. 21, 22.

IV. Refutation of some of the principal objections of the Immersionists.

V. Subordination of mere mode to the spirit and substance of the ordinance, as indicated by the expression, “baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Believing that this arrangement will facilitate the examination of the evidence, we proceed to consider.—

I. Occurrences of βαπτίζω, and its derivatives, which do not apply to the ordinance of Christian baptism. Let us attend to the following details.—

1. An example, involving a distinct reference to the Old Testament ritual, is furnished in Heb. ix. 10, “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*,—carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” We cancel the conjunction before “carnal ordinances,” as καί of the original has been very properly expunged by the great critical editors; but with this exception, we proceed upon the rendering of the authorized version. What then were

the “diverse *washings* or *baptisms*,”—*διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς*—which the apostle here places in the list of ceremonies observed by the ancient Jewish church? The construction, in which the term occurs, has occasioned great difficulty to interpreters, as may be seen by consulting Macknight and Stuart on the *Hebrews*. In the judgment of the latter, “the meats and drinks,” &c., form part of the Jewish ceremonial at large; while the former restricts them to the service immediately connected with the tabernacle or temple. Guided by the context in the ninth and eleventh verses, we adopt the restricted view of the ritual allusions in the text under consideration. The chief object of the apostle throughout the chapter is to contrast “the first tabernacle,” and its services, with the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” under the new economy; and as the tenth verse belongs to this contrasted view, and *may* be fairly understood of the *public* ceremonial, we can see no reason for referring it to the more private observances of the Jewish people. We merely indicate the exposition which we consider to be demanded alike by the scope of the passage, and the compact unity of the apostle’s argument; nor are we apprehensive for the result, whether its correctness is tested by the devout reading of the authorized version, or the critical analysis of the original. Regarding the *βαπτισμοῖς*, then, as associated with tabernacle worship, we observe,—

(1.) That if the term denote immersions, the epithet *different*—*διαφόροις*—seems bereft of its customary force and distinctness. Had the writer connected it with

meats and drinks, the application would have been obvious and natural; but what purpose it can serve as modifying immersions, which could not be very diverse from one another, it is not so easy to discover. This difficulty does not press on the interpretation of Stuart, who understands by the baptisms, Jewish ablutions in general. In Rom. xii. 6, *διάφορα* characterizes the gifts imparted to the early Christian teachers, these gifts being of *different* kinds, and, therefore, qualifying them for various departments of ministration. The Septuagint employs the same term, in its version of the prohibition, Deut. xxii. 9, against sowing a vineyard with *diverse* seeds, that is, seeds of different kinds. Here, also, the sense is transparent. In like manner, if by *βαπτισμῶς* we are to understand *washings*, as translators and lexicographers very generally maintain, the modifying term is at once intelligible: but if it denote immersions, we confess our inability to enter into the meaning, or appreciate the force of the expression.

(2.) The diverse *βαπτισμῶς*, whatever ablutions they designated, obviously applied to the persons of the worshippers. "The phrase," says Dr. Carson, "alludes to the *immersion* of the different things that by the law were to be *immersed*." But is this interpretation in keeping with the Apostle's design, and with the reasoning of the passage? The baptisms are classed with the *meats* and *drinks*, and in common with them are styled *δικαιώματα σαρκὸς*, *ordinances of the flesh*, that is, ordinances pertaining to the *body*, as distinguished from the *soul*. On this ground we contend, that the *washings*, no less than the meats and drinks, are limited



to the persons of the worshippers. Besides, these observances are noticed with special reference to their declared insufficiency to accomplish what was needed for the *conscience* of "him who did the service." Now, was it requisite, or would it have been natural, to assure the Hebrews, that the immersion of a pot or cup could not wash away the stains of the immortal spirit? An external ablution might be substituted by the superstitious for internal cleansing; but surely none were so ignorant and besotted, as to confound the washing of a basin with the purification of a conscience. The meats, drinks, and baptisms, then, belong alike to the persons of those who engaged in the tabernacle service.

(3.) We have no proof that immersion was even included in these baptisms. In the Mosaic law abundant provision is made for diverse ablutions, in connection with the public service of God; still we search in vain for any distinct command enjoining immersion, either upon the priests, or the people. From Exod. xxx. 19—21, we learn that God required the priests, through all their generations, before officiating in the divine service, to wash their hands and feet at the brass laver, which stood "between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar." A more general ablution was indeed imposed, at the period of their solemn inauguration, as in the case of Aaron and his sons, whom Moses washed with water at the door of the tabernacle. Yet, in regard to the entire circle of tabernacle rites, it is certain, as Mr. Godwin has affirmed, "that no terms, which any Hebrew scholar will pre-

tend, had the signification of dipping, are ever used, in reference to any of the ceremonial purifications of the person." If Baptists, therefore, will still insist on *immersions*, as the meaning intended by the Apostle, we must respectfully ask them to point out some of these immersions in the service of the ancient tabernacle. The diverse baptisms we have shown to have been personal, and we defy our opponents to produce evidence of personal immersion.

(4.) The subsequent reasonings of the Apostle prove, that by the baptisms we are to understand ceremonial washings, without regard to immersion. The correctness of this position, it will be observed, is not contingent on the limitation of the "carnal ordinances" to the tabernacle service. Dr. Wardlaw had stated, that among the "diverse washings," were included the *rantismata*, or sprinklings, which were the most numerous. In reply, Dr. Carson asserted that, even admitting the sprinklings to be included in the things here mentioned by Paul, they might be referred to the *carnal ordinances*. In this, however, the learned author betrayed ignorance of the true reading in the original, which employs the term carnal ordinances, not as expressive of something additional to the meats and drinks and baptisms, but merely as another name for the same ritual observances. According to the Greek, the meats and drinks and diverse baptisms go to compose the carnal ordinances. Dr. Wardlaw had farther maintained that these "washings" surely included all the various modes of Jewish purification;—a view which is also defended by Professor Stuart. To which Dr.

Carson answered, "This is not said here nor any where else in the Scriptures. There is no necessity to suppose that every thing enjoined in the law must be included in the things here mentioned. The Apostle designs to illustrate merely by specification, not to give a logical abstract." Without conceding, we shall suppose that Dr. Carson has rightly scanned the intention of the sacred writer. What follows? The Apostle here specifies; but of what, we ask, does his specification consist? Are we to imagine that he excludes from his list of ceremonial observances that particular rite which stands out so prominently in the succeeding part of his argument? The Apostle specifies; but surely his specification comprehends the legal purification, which forms one side of the subjoined contrast, between the cleansing efficacy of Judaism, as confined to the flesh, and the cleansing efficacy of Christianity, as reaching the conscience. In the *tenth* verse, meats and drinks, and diverse baptisms, are styled *ordinances of the flesh*; and in the thirteenth verse, the *sprinkling* of the unclean is said *to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh*. Does not the comparison of these verses distinctly identify *sprinkling* as *one of the ordinances of the flesh*?—and if so, it must belong to the class of *diverse baptisms*, unless our opponents should prefer the alternative of considering it *a meat or a drink*! Let the Baptist strain every nerve to confine the carnal ordinances within the narrowest possible limits, and we will still contend that the term possesses sufficient extension to cover that ceremonial sprinkling, "which sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." The grounds are manifest. If the

reader will take the trouble of examining closely the argument of the passage, from the eleventh to the fourteenth verse inclusive, he will be constrained to recognise in it an impressive contrast, founded on the previous specification, and this alone is required for the triumphant defence of our exposition.

The general sentiments here advocated will be found ably sustained by Dr. Halley, who, however, appears somewhat undecided, respecting the *personal* application of the diverse baptisms. After duly considering all that he and Drs. Gale and Carson, with some other writers on both sides, have urged upon the subject, we can discover no reason for abandoning, or even modifying, the views at which we had previously arrived.

2. Heb. vi. 2, “The doctrine βαπτισμῶν of baptisms.” The chief obstacle in the way of ascertaining the mode of these baptisms, arises out of the obscurity attending the reference of the term. If, with Schoettgen, Rosenmüller, Vater, and others, we include the ritual ablutions of the Jews, in the Apostle’s baptisms, we shall be compelled to admit *variety* in the mode of administration. “But what has the Apostle to do here,” inquires Mr. Stuart, “with Jewish ceremonial rites, as the first elements of *Christian* doctrine?” We find a reply in the fact, that this Epistle was addressed to the Hebrews, whose elementary instruction in Christianity involved certain principles and practices embodied in the Jewish system. For instance, the *repentance* and *faith*, referred to in the first verse, were, in many respects, the common property of both dispensations.



In a slightly modified form, the same statement holds in relation to the *baptisms*. The religion of Moses had its ablutions, the religion of Christ had its one baptism; but when these are considered under the same designation, the plural is appropriately employed to comprehend both. This view we greatly prefer to that of Stuart, who appears to understand these *baptisms* of the Christian ordinance, and refers to the *Philologia Sacra* of Glassius, for an explanation of the plural, instead of the singular. The entire doctrine of Glassius, on this point, evinces little acumen, while its proposed application, by Stuart, to the example before us, is not shown to be either necessary or warrantable. Recourse to such grammatical substitution, for the purpose of getting rid of a difficulty in exegesis, we contemplate with suspicion and alarm. It is also to be observed that, in the New Testament, βάπτισμα is the term appropriated to the initiatory rite of our religion, which is not once denoted by βαπτισμός. For these reasons, we cannot interpret the Apostle's language, to the exclusion of Jewish washings; and we recognise, of course, no antecedent necessity, and can discover none in the circumstances of the case, for identifying the doctrine of baptisms with the doctrine of immersions.

3. A class of examples, somewhat different, we find in the Gospels of Mark and Luke.—Mark vii. 3, 4, 8, “The Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from market, ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσανται, *except they wash*, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold,

as βαπτισμὸς *the washing* of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and tables, or couches. \* \* \* Ye hold the tradition of men, as βαπτισμὸς *the washing* of pots and cups.”—Luke xi. 37, 38, “A certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first—ἐβαπτίσθη—*washed* before dinner.”

If the term baptism foreclosed inquiry, respecting the mode of these washings, the labour of the interpreter would be comfortably abbreviated. But as that position is, in our view, untenable, we are forced to occupy different ground. Vagueness of historical reference forms the great difficulty to be encountered in searching after the character of Pharisaic baptisms. In our examination of the first passage from Hebrews, we found sure footing in the recorded connexion of the “diverse washings,” with rites prescribed by the divine law, and practised in the service of the tabernacle. But these texts from the Gospels point to ablutions which were largely the fruit of will-worship, and they thus bring us into contact with the traditionary ceremonies so zealously patronised by the scribes and Pharisees. The authorized version renders these baptisms, *washings*,—a term which manifestly conveys the substantive import of the observances mentioned by the sacred penmen. In the cases specified, washing seems to be indispensable. Where defilement is contracted, whether it affects the whole person, or is confined to the hands; whether a brazen vessel, or a couch requires purification, the cleansing process will be performed, not by simple

immersion, but by washing. As these passages, however, have been too sedulously contested in the discussion, to be put off with a perfunctory notice, we are under the necessity of entering into a somewhat detailed and critical examination. The views we entertain may be thus stated.

(1.) There is a marked difference between the washing of the hands, and the baptism referred to in Mark vii. 3, 4. Dr. Boothroyd seems to identify in meaning the verbs *νίπτω* and *βαπτίζω*; but he adduces no evidence in support of his exposition. He notices, indeed, the well-known various reading, which, though not entitled to supersede that of the text, should not be overlooked. For *βαπτίσανται* in v. 4, the *Codex Vaticanus*, with *eight* or *nine* MSS., in cursive character, substitutes *ραντίσανται*. But were the variation of sufficient value to displace the received text, instead of destroying, it would obviously sustain the existence of a distinction between the two ablutions. Our business, then, is with the language as it stands in the *Textus receptus*, and deservedly obtains the sanction of the critical editors; and as this language clearly involves the *fact*, our main inquiry must be directed to the *character*, of the distinction. Are the washings to be regarded as different in kind; or, does the one embrace a total, while the other is limited to a partial ablution of the person? The only remaining supposition is, that both *mode* and *extent* may possibly enter into the distinction recognised by the evangelist.

Dr. Campbell applies both washings to the hands, the cleansing process being accomplished in the one case by

perfusion, and in the other by immersion. Accordingly, his translation of the verse is as follows:—"For the Pharisees \* \* eat not until they have washed their hands by pouring a little water upon them; and if they be come from the market by dipping them." In the view of Olshausen and others, the baptism of the text applies not to the Pharisees themselves, but to the things which they purchased in the market,—an exegesis on which we would deem it foolish to waste a refutation. Though not alluded to by Campbell, the distinction for which he contends derives some countenance from ascertained Jewish customs. Rabbinical writers mention the נטילת ידים, or washing of hands by affusion, and the טבילת ידים, or washing of hands by immersion, as the expressions are rendered by learned Orientalists; while the code of tradition specified the process to be observed in each of these rites of ceremonial purification. More recent critics, however, have thrown up strong objections against Dr. Campbell's exposition, in which he followed Lightfoot, Wetstein, Bishop Pearce, and others. Referring to its advocates generally, Fritzsche says,—"*Illorum ratio explicandi non cadit in verba Graeca,*"—meaning, that had the sacred writer intended to confine the washing to the hands, he must have connected τὰς χεῖρας, in syntax with βαπτίσαντας, the absence of a regimen, except in peculiar cases, being inconsistent with a partial ablution. Having already concurred in the assertion of this principle, we can perceive no just grounds for opposing its application to the case before us, particularly when we consider that it is maintained by such critics as Krebs,



and Kuinöl, who differ from those already cited, and from each other, in their view of the construction of the passage.

The remaining point relates to the mode of this baptism; and here the record of Jewish customs, it must be acknowledged, supplies no satisfactory information. Had the term invariably denoted immersion, as Dr. Carson argues, its own evidence would have settled the point; but as we have not found its meaning to be a fixed quantity, we are precluded from adopting that convenient line of argument. In our path of inquiry, we have encountered βαπτίζω where there was no *dip*, and hence it is morally impossible for us to admit Dr. Carson's conclusion. A solitary adverse instance lays his theory in ruins, and stamps its numerous applications as unfounded. But there are, we hold, many such instances, and, therefore, *from a usage which does not exist*, we cannot infer the identity of Pharisaic baptism with immersion. The inadequacy of the evidence of the term compels us to have recourse to the probabilities of the case, and to such collateral proof as may be available; and our Baptist friends are not slow to embrace any similar opening which logic or antiquity may present. Thus, the testimony produced by Schoettgen, to the effect that the Jews practised immersion, before offering sacrifice, has been more than once paraded on their side of the question; though it is wholly inapplicable in the instance of an ordinary repast, as has been often and most conclusively replied. With respect to the import of the clause, and the character of the ablution, Dr. Bloomfield says,—“This is best

explained by Grotius and Fritzsche, ‘ unless they wash themselves,’ *i. e.* their bodies (namely, in opposition to the washing of the hands before mentioned); because, after coming from a place of such public resort, and where people in a crowd must touch one another, they might unintentionally have touched some impure person or thing, and hence might require a more exact [extensive?] ablution, than merely washing the hands. Here, however, we are not to suppose *immersion* implied, (that being never used, except when some *actual*, and not *possible* pollution had been incurred); but merely ordinary washing; or perhaps on occasions of urgent haste, sprinkling. Hence the gloss (for it is no more) of some MSS., ῥαντίσωνται.”—The view stated by Bloomfield is sustained by the authority of most of our leading Greek lexicons, which generally concur in regarding this baptism as a bathing or washing, not necessarily implying immersion. As an example in which the regimen is not expressed, it contains no positive evidence respecting mode; but the record of Pharisaic customs, so far as it has been preserved, and strong probability, where the record ceases, unite in opposing the exclusive principle of the Immersionists.

(2.) We are now, in some degree, prepared for disposing of the reference to “the washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and couches.” In all the New Testament occurrences of βαπτισμός, Schleusner considers *lotio*, or *washing*, to be the primary signification; and in this he merely echoes the finding of the great mass of lexicographers. The same meaning is assigned to the term by Olshausen, on the passage before us, and also

in Heb. ix. 10. Dr. Campbell prefers the rendering,—“baptisms of cups”—for which preference he has stated several reasons, more or less cogent. One of them is based on the alleged correspondence between certain ablutions prescribed under the Jewish system, and the ordinance of Christian baptism. This correspondence, the author contends, should be so clearly exhibited in our translations, as to enable the mere English reader at once to appreciate its character and extent. In regard to the terms in the original languages, “The Hebrew **טָבַל**,” he informs us, “perfectly corresponds to the Greek **βάπτω** and **βαπτίζω**, which are synonymous, and is always rendered by one or other of them in the Septuagint.” Besides the false assertion that **βάπτω** and **βαπτίζω** are synonymous, this statement contains an error respecting a plain matter of fact, which deeply concerns our present inquiries. The Septuagint does *not*, in all instances, employ one or other of these Greek terms, as the representative of the Hebrew **טָבַל**. In Gen. xxxvii. 31, that ancient version renders **וַיִּטְבְּלוּ**, by the Greek word **ἐμόλυναν**, “they stained,” thus undeniably indicating, that in the judgment of the translators, the Hebrew verb is not absolutely confined to the sense of immersion. We are not to be understood as admitting that it would be *so* limited, even were the assertion of Dr. Campbell as true, as we have proved it to be false. Let it not be objected that the evidence, by which we upset his position, is furnished by a solitary occurrence. Adduced for the purpose of proving that the Septuagint translators did not consider **טָבַל** strictly univocal, it is as good as a thousand testimonies.

One such instance takes the most venerable, and, for critical purposes, the most valuable version of the Hebrew Scriptures, out of the hands of those who produce its authority for binding this verb either to baptism or immersion. It may be mentioned, that in arranging the significations of the Hebrew term, the *Standard Concordance* of Fürst, assigns the last place to immersion, the order being *rigare, tingere, perfundere, immergere*; and that Meier in his *Wurzelwörterbuch*, also regards *immerse* as a secondary acceptation. The arrangement of these eminent Hebraists we do not endorse as the most complete and philosophical that could be devised:—our object is simply to show that high authority, as well as powerful argument, must be met by those whose system requires them to advocate the exclusively modal sense of טָבַל.

Having shown that the connexion of the Greek with the Hebrew does not fix, so definitely as Dr. Campbell imagined, the mode of different Jewish ablutions, we revert to “the baptisms of cups, couches,” &c. The language plainly intimates, that these baptisms were of a religious or ceremonial character, as they were performed in deference to “the traditions of the elders.” By the law of Moses, the purification of polluted vessels was effected in various ways, as by rinsing them in water, Levit. xv. 12; by scouring and rinsing in water, vi. 28; and simply by putting them into water, xi. 32; which is a case of obvious immersion. From this evidence it appears, that if the Pharisaic baptisms were conformed to the ancient ritual, the process of cleansing was not only compatible with diversity of mode, but



must have exhibited diversity, as a feature expressly enjoined. It will be said, however, that as the practices, condemned by our Saviour, were traditionary and superstitious, we have no right to assume their coincidence, either in form or spirit, with the requirements of the ceremonial law. We admit, to a certain extent, the validity of the objection. That the Pharisees unwarrantably multiplied both the objects to be purified, and the occasions of purification, is a fact beyond all controversy. But though their will-worship made accessions to this department of the legal institute, we do not find them charged with *altering*, much less *setting aside*, these smaller matters of the law. They sinned by addition, and by the substitution of the *outward* for the *inward*—of ceremony for sanctity; but their punctiliousness was too devout to immerse a vessel which the law required to be cleansed by rinsing. The nature of the observances, therefore, combined with the character of Pharisaism, appears to render it morally certain, that in the manner of washing pots and cups, &c., the Jews would not fail to carry out the minutest niceties of legal prescription. On this ground the proof of diversity of mode, appears to us very strong, if not quite decisive. Another argument against exclusive immersion is founded on the variety of objects to be purified by ablution. Thus, while it would be natural to have recourse to immersion in the washing of cups, it seems in the highest degree improbable that a similar process would be applied to tables or couches. Lightfoot maintains distinctly that the baptism of the couches was by sprinkling: and the term is identified with simple

washing in the Syriac version, and by the leading Orientalists and commentators. Dr. Carson must have the couches dipped; and he will take them to pieces, if requisite, rather than permit any part to escape the plunge bath. When Origen refers to Elijah, commanding his attendants to *baptize* the altar, if the historical reference had perished, we doubt not our Baptist polemics would have made out a case for immersion altogether satisfactory to themselves. But we know, and Origen knew, that *the baptism consisted in pouring water upon the altar*. In the instance before us, there is no record of history, we admit, to determine the mode; but that couches were baptized by pouring or sprinkling, the nature of the case has satisfied the first biblical scholars of every age and country.

(3.) Let us now consider the ablution which the Pharisee expected our Saviour to perform, Luke xi. 38. With all the dipping predilections of his philology, Dr. Campbell has thus rendered the text:—"But the Pharisee was surprised to observe that *he used no washing* before dinner." What kind of washing did the scrupulous zealot imagine our Lord should have used, as a preparation for sitting down to an ordinary meal? Washing by immersion, say our opponents, because that mode, and that alone, is denoted by the verb βαπτίζω. Yet, in an American translation of the New Testament, under Baptist auspices, instead of immerse, the term bathe is adopted in the rendering of this passage. By employing a word, which, as regards mode, is perfectly equivocal in its meaning, the translators have practically evinced want of confidence in their principle of exclusive

immersion. Dr. Carson rather gratuitously applauded a prolix and uncritical discussion of the verse by Gale, as furnishing "a triumphant answer to every quibble from Dr. Wall." What the author meant by Dr. Wall's quibbles, we do not profess to understand; but of this we are certain, that if he quibbled, his example proved infectious to his learned antagonist. We feel pleasure in recommending Wall's rejoinder, which it may be charitably presumed Dr. Carson never saw, (*Hist. of Infant Bapt.* Vol. IV. p. 125, ff.,) for a shrewd exposure of the errors and fallacies which vitiate Dr. Gale's reasonings. Besides, Gale and Carson are directly opposed to each other on a point of some importance to the meaning of the passage. The former confines the baptism to the hands of our Saviour, while the latter extends it to his whole body. According to Dr. Gale, our Saviour would have been baptized, had his hands only been washed in a certain manner; and hence Dr. Wall charges him with "giving up all the cause at once," by endorsing the proposition, that the language of Scripture identifies a partial immersion with baptism properly so called.

In regard to the main inquiry, we observe that circumstances, both of rational probability and historical fact, strongly discountenance the idea of ablution, by dipping the person. Is it at all likely that a party, casually invited to dinner, as our Saviour was, would be expected to immerse himself, preparatory to the repast? Still farther, would it have been natural in itself, or was it imposed by custom, to perform such immersion at the house of his entertainer? Even had

the observance been practised by the more formal and superstitious among the Jews, was that any reason why it should be exacted of our Saviour, or astonishment felt at its neglect? *He* made no pretensions to the sanctimonious garb of a Pharisaic pietism. The routine of ceremonial service, which “the righteousness of man” had swelled out beyond the boundaries of divine prescription, he stamped with indignant rebuke, instead of honouring it with practical conformity. The Pharisees knew this; and hence it is contrary to all probability to suppose that they could wonder at his disregard of a ritual, which he publicly and unsparingly denounced. On this ground, it is maintained that ordinary washing alone could have been contemplated by the Pharisee who invited our Saviour to his table.

Again, it has been observed with truth that history supplies no record whatever of the existence of immersion, as a Pharisaic qualification for partaking of a common meal. The only proof of this nature, attempted by Baptist writers, is taken from Josephus, *De Bel. Jud.* Lib. II. c. 8, who states, that the Essenes bathed themselves in cold water before dinner. This testimony refers to a practice which obtained in the days of our Lord; but it is directly opposed to the cause on behalf of which it is produced. We accordingly claim it as evidence in support of our views. Josephus was a Pharisee. This daily immersion was practised by the Essenes. Had it formed part of the ritual observed by the Jewish people in common, and especially by the Pharisees, the learned historian would not have described it as a peculiarity of one small sect. The conclusion,



then, to which the evidence points, is manifestly that, inasmuch as immersion before dinner was not customary among the Pharisees, the entertainer of Jesus could not have " marvelled " at the neglect of an ablution, which the code of Pharisaism itself did not impose.

Dr. Carson condemns an appeal to external evidence, as implying that we refuse to believe the evangelist without a voucher. But this is a most unfair statement of the case. We go to the history of Jewish customs, not for confirmation of the evangelist's testimony, but for illustration of the evangelist's meaning. The evangelist's meaning ! It is too plain, argues the doctor, to be misunderstood. With all its alleged plainness, we reply, the two greatest champions of Baptist views, Gale and Carson, cannot agree about the ablution which the Pharisee expected our Saviour to perform. What was the character of this ablution ? Several writers, Baptist and Pædobaptist, maintain that Jesus merely transgressed the tradition of the elders, by " eating bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands." Others extend the washing to the whole person, on the principle that when βαπτίζω is employed without a regimen, the ablution, or immersion, is not partial but total. This principle, however, as we have already seen, requires frequent modification. In our own language, we speak of *washing*, without specifying any part, yet every one understands the ablution to be partial. The same analogy applies to other languages, including Greek, which supplies abundance of examples. When the washing is of ordinary occurrence, such as the Pharisees used before dinner, the nature of the case

combines with the ascertained practice of the parties, in introducing a principle of natural limitation. The baptism referred to in Mark, we consider a general ablution, because the occasion is more uncommon, and also because it is presented in contrast with a partial washing. In that occurrence, the limiting circumstances are wanting. Whereas, in the passage before us, the ablution is ordinary, and its limited character best comports with what we know of the code of Pharisaism.

Were it desirable to confirm our view by learned authorities, nothing would be easier than to adduce an array of accomplished scholars. But we forbear. The testimony of Greek fathers is more to our purpose, as all are constrained to admit, that they knew the meaning of their own language. Now, from that unexceptionable quarter, we are sustained in understanding this washing before dinner of a limited or partial ablution. In expounding Luke xi. 38, Theophylact, as cited by President Beecher, not only substitutes καθαρῖζω for βαπτῖζω, which substitution does not, of course, touch the question of mode; but also applies to the same ablution, the verb commonly appropriated to the mere washing of the hands and feet. “The use of νίπτεισθαι,” Beecher justly observes, “clearly denotes that Theophylact regarded the baptism expected of Jesus as a washing of the hands.” See also Olshausen’s *Biblischer Commentar* on the passage. That the limitation for which we contend rests on the established principles of language is manifest; and that the sense assigned to βαπτῖζω is abundantly warranted, by New Testament

and patristic usage, will appear in the sequel with a force of evidence which we conceive calculated to carry rational conviction.

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II. Let us consider occurrences of βαπτίζω, and its derivatives, which denote “the baptism of John,” and of Jesus, and the intimately related baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Whatever may have been the difference in design, or in general character, between the baptism administered by John, and that instituted by Jesus, these observances were alike distinguished by the external application of water. So far, therefore, as the outward rite is concerned, Scripture testimonies may be canvassed promiscuously, whether they relate to the *preparatory* ordinance, or denote the baptism enjoined in the Apostolic commission. Our examination of this part of the evidence may be prefaced with one or two statements, respecting the construction of the verb in the New Testament.—

1. The preposition εἰς, with a word *supposed* to signify the baptizing element, forms the regimen of βαπτίζω, in one solitary occurrence. This singular fact cannot be regarded as unimportant; for it may possibly indicate a peculiarity of usage, bearing more or less directly on the question of immersion. The unique exception, to which we refer, is found in Mark i. 9, “He was baptized of John in Jordan,”—ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην. On this construction great stress has been laid, as if it

necessarily affirmed that our blessed Saviour *was dipped into* the river of Israel. Now, suppose we admitted the affirmation to be correct and scriptural, might not the admission operate somewhat dangerously to the baptismal interests of those who fancy they can read in it the triumph of their cause? By the supposition, the force of the argument, in support of dipping, is derived from the construction of the verb with *εἰς*, and the noun denoting the baptizing element. But as this construction is absolutely confined to an individual occurrence in the Greek Scriptures, how is immersion to be sustained in the multitude of cases, from which this species of evidence is utterly excluded? This consideration shows, at least, how unsafe it would be for the Baptist to erect the passage in Mark into a main pillar of his biblical argument in favour of immersion.

We are not disposed, however, to surrender to our opponents the preposition *εἰς*, in this important testimony. Supported by the authority of New Testament usage, we maintain that in numerous constructions, several of them closely parallel to the example before us, *εἰς* is employed where motion is not indicated by the verb with which it stands connected, and where, therefore, the rendering *into*, is totally incompatible with the *existing* syntax. Bruder, in his Concordance to the Greek Testament, enumerates not fewer than *sixty-five* instances of this construction, and among them he includes the text under discussion. The usage may be briefly illustrated.—Acts xxv. 15, Γενομένου μου εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, “When I was *at*, (not *into*) Jerusalem.” Acts xxiii. 11, “For as—διεμαρτύρω εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ—



thou hast testified *at* Jerusalem, so must thou *bear witness* also, εἰς 'Ρώμην, *at* Rome."—Acts xxi. 13, "I am ready—ἀποθανεῖν εἰς 'Ιερουσαλήμ, to die *at* Jerusalem."—John xxi. 4, "Jesus—ἔστη εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν, stood on the shore."—Luke xxi. 37, "At night,—ἡυλίζετο εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ καλούμενον 'Ελαιῶν, he abode *in* the mount that is called the mount of Olives."—John ix. 7, "Go—νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθεραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ, wash *in* the pool of Siloam."

We see little ground for dissatisfaction with Dr. Carson's mode of explaining instances of this class, particularly as it serves rather to confirm than invalidate the conclusion which we believe to be founded in truth. Many of his remarks, on the meaning of the Greek prepositions, are conceived in the best spirit of a judicious and enlightened criticism, and they elucidate general principles, which are essential to the right interpretation of language. Having, in the present instance, quoted Matthiae, as stating that "various verbs which, of themselves, do not imply motion, receive this sense, by the construction with εἰς," he thus proceeds to develop what he considers to be a more accurate and philosophical view.—"I agree with Matthiae as to the fact; I differ from him as to its philosophy. \* \* \* My doctrine is, that the motion is implied in a verb which is understood, and is not properly communicated to a verb that has no motion in itself. It is absurd to suppose that the same verb can designate both rest and motion. It is impossible both to stand and move at the same time. What I say is, when εἰς is construed with a verb in which there is no motion, there is always a

verb of motion understood, and which is not expressed, because it is necessarily suggested." Though the writer styles this *his* doctrine, and seems to introduce it as a novelty; yet we find the knowledge of it to be happily not uncommon among Greek scholars, whose works have been a considerable time before the learned world. Hemsterhusius stated it in a note on the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, v. 1169, and illustrated his meaning by a parallel example from another Greek writer. Krebs not only applied the principle to the interpretation of Mark i. 9, but classed this particular use of εἰς, instead of ἐν, among the more elegant constructions of the language. It is also found in some of the best lexicons; and among other critical authorities, Winer in his *Idioms* of the New Testament, and Fritzsche in his *Commentary on Mark*, employ it in expounding the passage under consideration.

Apart, however, from the fancy of its originality, let us inquire what purpose can be served by the application of this principle to the controversy respecting the mode of baptism. The blind man was commanded by our Saviour to wash, εἰς, *into* the pool of Siloam; that is, when we supply the verb of motion, to *go into* the pool, and wash there. The effect of this construction the Baptist should gravely ponder. That it separates the preposition from the verb denoting to wash, and connects it with the verb of motion understood, is self-evident. We cannot say, "Go *into* the pool, and wash *into* it; for that form of expression would create anew the very difficulty which our criticism had manfully annihilated. Whatever action, therefore, the verb *wash*

is used to designate, must be performed *in* the pool, not *into* the pool. The preposition *into* being wholly appropriated by the implied verb of motion, the sense of the passage, no less than the grammatical principle, imperiously forbids the connexion of the same preposition with *wash*. To join it with both would violate the canon, and produce a case of philological bigamy. No critic, in fact, could defend such a connexion without either abandoning the very principle on which the proposed construction is founded, or involving himself in an *infinite series* of supplied verbs of motion.

The bearing of the principle on Mark i. 9, now solicits our attention. We have seen that some of the most learned interpreters, such as Krebs, Winer, and Fritzsche, consider this text to be a case in point. Whether Dr. Carson's view entirely coincides with theirs, appears somewhat doubtful, as he has advanced two views, which are not particularly consistent with each other. "Jesus," he says, "was baptized into Jordan. This shows not only that the action of the verb was performed in the water, but that the performance of it was a putting of the baptized person *into* the water." Again, he says, "The account of the Evangelist not merely asserts that Jesus went *into* the water, but that, when in the water, he was baptized or immersed *into* it." Of these statements, the former connects the preposition *into* with *baptized*; the latter supplies a *verb of motion* before *baptized*, and joins the preposition successively with both, thus compelling it to do double duty! Against this flagrant error in syntax we enter our protest. The author palpably violates the

principle which he had imposingly laid down as *his* doctrine," and illustrated at some length. According to this doctrine, the preposition belongs to a previous verb of motion understood; and Dr. Carson so employs it when he represents the evangelist as asserting, "that Jesus *went into* the water." Thus the preposition εἰς, separated from ἐβαπτίσθη, and joined to a preceding verb, is finally disposed of. But our author, as if he had effected no such separation, again very complacently construes the same preposition with ἐβαπτίσθη, in order to prove that the baptism was *into* Jordan! The simple record of such philology forms its exposure and refutation. With either verb the preposition may be legitimately connected; but to use it with both, especially in the teeth of Carson's own *doctrine*, is preposterous, and indefensible. Fritzche's construction of the verse is obnoxious to censure on the same ground, and hence it does not call for a separate exposure. The conclusion, then, is irresistible, that in Mark i. 9, the introduction of a verb of motion, immediately connected with the preposition, has the inevitable effect of eliminating from the diction of the New Testament, the only instance it contains of βαπτίζω, followed by εἰς, and the accusative of the term denoting the baptizing element. Admit Dr. Carson's principle, and *baptism into the Jordan* is neither Scriptural nor practicable.—Admit it, and Mark i. 9, as a boasted testimony to immersion is silenced for ever.

Having discussed the structure and general import of this passage, we are reminded, by its reference to Jordan, of the necessity of noticing a popular objection,



which has more weight with some minds than the most potent argument.

If baptism might have been administered by sprinkling or affusion, why, it is demanded by our opponents, did John select a river as an appropriate place for observing the ordinance? What account can be honestly given of the people,—of our blessed Lord,—repairing to the Jordan, unless the baptism, to which they submitted, was by immersion? Is there no hesitancy—no mis-giving of conscience, with respect to the sufficiency of the answer which sprinkling or affusion can return to these plain inquiries?—Might we not demand, on the other hand, why the blind man was sent to the pool of Siloam to wash? Was so large a collection of water necessary to supply a few drops for his eyes? Is conscience satisfied with the sufficiency of the answer which represents him as going to a pool, in order to perform so trifling and partial an ablution? Yet we are certain, from the recorded facts, and from the use of *νίπτω*, that this washing was confined to a very small part of the body. Hence it is apparent that the mere circumstance of an ablution being performed in a pool, or river, or even in the ocean, is inadequate to identify that ablution with the act of immersion.

Another fact, connected with ceremonial washings, deserves to be considered. Both among the heathen and the Jews, rivers were resorted to for purposes of purification; because running water, especially in warm countries, obtained a merited preference over that which was stagnant. Nor were the people commonly satisfied to receive the water of the river at a distance;—they

drew near to the living stream. “Thus those admitted into the lesser or introductory mysteries of Eleusis were previously purified on the banks of the Ilissus, by water being *poured* upon them by the Udranos.” They went to the river, and still there was no immersion. Under the Mosaic economy, also, the use of running water was enjoined for various purifications, both by bathing and sprinkling; and in such institutions common-sense and divine appointment manifestly go hand in hand. Those who are solicitous to search into the motives by which learned men suppose John to have been prompted in selecting the Jordan as one of his baptism-stations, are referred to Lampe’s *Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus Evangelii Secundum Joannem*, Tom. I., pp. 427, 428. It must not be forgotten, however, that New Testament baptism was far more frequently administered in localities where there existed no large streams, or collections of water, to afford facilities for immersion. Indeed, the argument of our opponents on this point, as has been hinted, and shall be shown, is more popular than solid; and in their fervid appeals to Jordan and Aenon, logic is often drowned in declamation.

2. The prevalent, if not exclusive, New Testament regimen presents βαπτίζω, followed by the dative, with or without a preposition. The same construction we found in the Greek classics, where, however, it occurs with less frequency. We shall examine the character of the syntax closely, having first submitted a few examples.—Mat. iii. 3, “I indeed baptize you—ἐν ὕδατι—with water: . . . he shall baptize you—ἐν Πνεύματι

ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ—*with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*” The same regimen occurs in Mark i. 8, “I indeed have baptized you *with water*: but he shall baptize you *with the Holy Ghost.*” See also John i. 26, 31, 33. In Luke iii. 16, Acts i. 5, and xi. 16, ὕδατι, without the preposition, forms the regimen of the verb denoting the act of baptism. That in these and similar instances, ἐν should be rendered *in*, is maintained by the Baptists; while the opponents of exclusive immersion muster an array of parallels, supported by a strong force of critical disquisition, in defence of the doctrine that this regimen is what grammarians call the dative of instrument. Our views on the point may be distinctly conveyed, by taking the passage first cited, and unfolding its meaning in the light of those facts and circumstances with which it holds the most intimate relations.

Mat. iii. 11, embraces John’s baptism with water, and that of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. In contrast with the authorized version of the text, which has been already given, we place the rendering adopted by Dr. Campbell, as follows:—“I indeed baptize you in water: . . . he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.” The question to be solved is now apparent. Did the evangelist intend to convey the idea of immersion in water and in the Spirit; or the idea of baptism with water and with the Spirit? Is mode necessarily involved in the language: or does the character of the ordinance consist with variety of administration? Admitting that Dr. Campbell’s rendering exhibits no violation of Greek syntax, we unhesitatingly claim for that of the authorized version, at least an equal correspondence with the

laws of the Greek language. It would, indeed, be waste of time to prove, by examples, that Greek, whether Classical or Hellenistic, most frequently employs the dative, with or without the preposition ἐν, to denote instrumentality.

Regarded under a different aspect, that part of John's statement which is prophetic, brings before us certain Scripture connections, calculated to open up an important vein of thought. "Jesus shall baptize you," said his illustrious forerunner, "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Of this prophecy, the pen of inspiration has happily recorded the fulfilment, thus enabling us to ascertain definitively, whether or not baptism with the Spirit exemplifies the mode of immersion. Our blessed Lord solemnly assured his disciples (Acts i. 5), that this baptism should take place not many days after his ascension, thus repeating the promise, and preparing their minds for its great Pentecostal fulfilment. These things being so, we found on the divine record of this memorable transaction, the following proposition:—

THAT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, THERE WAS BAPTISM, BUT NO IMMERSION.—Acts ii. 1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The efforts of Immersionists to detect dipping in this transaction,



which is universally recognised as the Spirit's baptism, have produced some curious specimens of biblical interpretation. By the ablest of our opponents, it is alleged that, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were dipped into the emblems of the Spirit:—and while the extraction of this sense from the sacred narrative demands some expository ingenuity, the subjoined remarks will show that this indispensable commodity has not been wanting.

Dr. Carson affirms explicitly, that “on the day of Pentecost, there was *a real baptism in the emblems of the Spirit.*” “The disciples,” he further informs us, “were literally covered with the *appearance* of wind and fire!” In a similar strain of remark, he speaks of “the wind descending to fill the house that the disciples might be baptized in it.” And again, “they were surrounded by the wind, and covered by the fire above. They were, therefore, buried in wind and fire.” When we reflect on the character of the acute author, these expressions appear to us among the most extraordinary we have ever encountered. Only think of a man *covered* with the *appearance* of wind! Is there a particle of meaning in the language? But this does not form our main objection. When Dr. Carson represents the wind as descending to fill the house, apart altogether from the philosophy of the case, we would gladly learn the Scripture authority for such representation. Does the Bible state that the house was filled with wind? Is the sacred penman responsible for the *airy baptisterium*, which Immersionist genius has constructed? We reply with an unflinching negative.

(1.) The passage supplies no ground for the assertion that the house was filled with wind, nor is the existence of wind, on the occasion, in evidence. “Sonus venti vehementis,” says Lightfoot, in his *Hor. Heb. in Act.*, “sed absque vento : sic etiam linguae igneae, sed absque igne.” The evangelist simply affirms that there was a *sound*—ἄσπερ—as of a rushing mighty wind; and that *the sound* (for so the structure determines, see Kuinöl, and Olshausen, *in loc.*), filled the apartment where the disciples were assembled. He, therefore, stands pledged merely for the fact of the sound, and the circumstance of its similarity to the utterance of the tempest, without implying that there was in reality any atmospheric commotion, or consequently any filling of the house with wind. On this text the Baptist can make out no case for dipping, on the ground occupied by his modern leader; or if he will persist in immersing the disciples in Pentecostal wind, he must first provide that element, a solitary breath of which, so far as we learn from Scripture, never entered the chamber in which baptism with the Spirit was administered. Whether, on the authority of this construction, a more adventurous polemic may undertake the defence of a “real baptism,” in *sound* and fire, must be left to the future revelations of the controversy.

(2.) Immersion-baptism is not supported even by Dr. Carson’s exposition of this text. There was, he maintains, a “real baptism;” while he also admits in terms, that there was “no dipping.” How singular the admission from a writer, many of whose best days were spent in asserting, against all opposition, that

βαπτίζω means *dip*, and *nothing but dip*! Well, it is comfortable for the Pædobaptist to think, amid the scorn so liberally poured upon his system, that, in the judgment of Dr. Carson himself, there may be *a real baptism*, where there is *no dipping* or immersion. Indeed, we could scarcely conceive of a testimony more forcible, as against identifying immersion with baptism. The disciples having come together, the wind, if you will, and fire, as emblems of the Spirit, entered the place of their assemblage; and thus was administered that heavenly baptism which had been predicted successively by John and by our Saviour. The emblems came upon the disciples; the disciples were not dipped into the emblems. "Their baptism," says Carson, "consisted in being totally surrounded with the wind, not *in the manner* in which the wind came;" and we take leave to add, certainly not *in the manner* in which the disciples came—into contact with the wind. If language have meaning, here is a baptism without regard to *manner* or *mode*, and admitted to be so by an author whose fundamental position is, that "βαπτίζω never expresses any thing but mode!" An attempt is made to reconcile these contradictions, by alleging that, in reference to the Pentecostal effusion, the term baptism is used in a catachrestic or figurative acceptance. But does not this virtually abandon the dogma of a "real baptism" in the emblems of the Holy Spirit?—and where is the consistency of presenting for our acceptance a *reality* on one page, and on the next disappointing us by transforming the reality into a *catachresis*, a *figure of speech*? This procedure we pronounce extraordinary and unjust.

tifiable. It leaves on our mind the impression that figure has been summoned to the rescue of fact, because a real immersion is found incompatible with Dr. Carson's own exposition.

(3.) The correct interpretation discovers in the passage only one emblem of the Spirit, and thus completely explodes Dr. Carson's catachrestic immersion. That the place was filled with wind, is an unscriptural and groundless fancy;—that it was filled with a certain sound is clearly expressive of the means by which God attracted the attention of the disciples to the approach of the miraculous blessing. When the Lord makes himself known in the way of supernatural disclosure, the manifestation is commonly preceded by some preparatory circumstances of an impressive character. Thus, in the wondrous epiphany made to Elijah in the cave at Mount Horeb, wind, and earthquake, and fire successively went before that “still small voice,” in which the prophet reverently recognised the immediate presence of deity. In like manner, a sound as of the rushing tempest precedes the appearance of those tongues of fire, in which every man instantly perceives the appropriate emblem of that wonderful gift of tongues, by which the Spirit qualified the commissioned Apostles for the evangelization of the world. The sound was preparatory; the divided tongues, as of fire, constituted the significant emblem. On this ground, then, we dispose of the last vestige of a catachrestic immersion; while we reiterate Dr. Carson's statement and admission, that there was a “*real baptism*,” though there was “*no dipping*.”



(4.) The strength of the argument against exclusive immersion, derived from the Pentecostal baptism, admits of fuller development. We are charged by Dr. Carson with confounding things that differ, when we call the outpouring of the Spirit a baptism; and though the charge remains unproved, he has attempted to explain it. "Water," he says, "is *poured* out into a vessel in order to have things put into it. But the *pouring* out of the water, and the *application* of the water so poured out are different things. Water is poured into a bath in order to immerse the feet or the body, but the *immersion* is not the *pouring*. Now, our opponents confound these two things. Because the Spirit is said to be poured out in order to the baptism of the Spirit, they groundlessly conclude that the *pouring* is the *baptism*." Such are the positions taken by Dr. Carson, and that they are utterly indefensible we are prepared to show, by the evidence of Scripture, respecting the baptism of the Spirit. Let the following remarks be duly weighed.—

(a) The Pentecostal baptism does not exemplify the two operations of *pouring* and *immersion*. Water, we are told, is poured into a vessel, in order that the body may be wholly or partially dipped. This process we can understand,—the two parts of which it consists are clear as a sunbeam. But on the day of Pentecost we encounter only one part of the process, while the other is not merely omitted in the narrative, but cannot be reconciled with the recorded facts. The Holy Spirit descends in a peculiarly instructive emblem, and the disciples are baptized in the apartment where they had assembled. What is the mode of this baptism? We

are charged with confounding things that differ,—with failing to discriminate between *pouring* and *immersion*. But in this instance, where is the immersion? Whatever may have been the emblems of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they descended upon the disciples;—the disciples were not dipped into them. Water is poured out in order to immersion; but the Spirit was poured out as a baptism, and not in order to immersion. It is easy to perceive what process would have realised the Baptist view of this solemn transaction. The emblems of the Spirit must have first filled the apartment, as the water is poured into the vessel; and then the disciples must have been let down into this baptizing element, as the body is dipped into the poured out water. Now, the day of Pentecost exhibits the *descent*, or the pouring,—for both terms are applied to it,—while we search in vain for the immersion. The part of the operation which consists in *pouring* presents itself to every eye; will our opponents be good enough to produce the part which consists in immersion? God testifies to the descent of the emblems of the Spirit upon the disciples; but God has not testified to the immersion of the disciples into the emblems of the Spirit. The former, therefore, we receive as the testimony of God; the latter we repudiate as the groundless teaching of man. We believe in Pentecostal baptism, as the fulfilment of the prediction uttered by John, and reiterated by Jesus; we reject Pentecostal immersion, because there was “no dipping,” and nothing, in fact, which can be tortured into an act of immersion.

(b) Other Scripture allusions to pouring or affusion,

as the Spirit's baptism, leave no room for immersion. This baptism is introduced in Acts ii. 16, 17, as the fulfilment of the prediction by Joel;—"In the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit *upon* all flesh." In v. 33, the same blessing is said to be *shed forth*, or *poured out*, by the Saviour then exalted at the right hand of God. Chap. x. 45, represents the gift of the Holy Ghost as "*poured out on* the Gentiles;" and when the Holy Ghost *fell on* the Gentiles, xi. 16, Peter remembered "the word of the Lord, how that he said, Ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*."

Let us now ascertain whether the *pouring*, mentioned in these testimonies, corresponds with Dr. Carson's view of the Spirit's baptism. "Water," says he, "is poured into a bath in order to immerse the feet or the body." But what saith the Scripture? Is the Spirit emblematically poured into some receptacle, in order that the candidates for baptism may be immersed in his influences? On the contrary, the baptizing element is uniformly represented as poured out *upon the object* to be baptized. "I will *pour out* of my Spirit *upon all flesh*." "*On the Gentiles* was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit is not poured out in order to immersion; but the Spirit is poured out directly on the objects to be benefited by his gracious influences. The pouring takes place under circumstances which leave no room for immersion. Dr. Carson imagines a process, for which the Scripture affords no warrant, when he distinguishes the *pouring* from the *baptism*. There is not, and there cannot be, an immersion into the poured out emblems of the Spirit, simply because these emblems

are poured out upon the parties who receive the Spirit's baptism. Here, therefore, is a baptism administered by pouring, in such circumstances as utterly preclude the possibility of dipping.

(c) Our reasoning is not disturbed by the fact, that the agency of the Spirit is represented under a variety of emblems. As a dove, he is said to alight ; as dew, he is said to distil ; as water, he is said to be poured out or sprinkled, and so on. Now, we are challenged to produce a reason for applying to baptism any one of these modes in preference to another. Why not baptize by some process resembling the gentle distillation of the dew, or the flight of the dove, and its alighting on its chosen perch ? Our answer is at hand. We reject the mode of gentle distillation, because the appointed element in baptism is not dew ; we adopt the mode of pouring or sprinkling, because the appointed element is water. This mode, however, we do not advocate on the principle that it symbolizes the outpouring of the Spirit ; for we entirely agree with Dr. Carson, that an emblem of an emblem is opposed to the laws of language. Our view is simple, and we apprehend, will not be easily overthrown. The emblematical outpouring of the Spirit upon the subject is the Spirit's baptism ; why not, on the same principle, recognise the outpouring of water upon the subject as water baptism ? The Spirit, we may be told, accommodates himself to the emblem ; but this does not affect the reality of baptism by pouring :—and indeed we are aware of no Baptist argument powerful enough to dislodge us from our position. Dr. Carson affirms that the Spirit was *poured out*,



in order that the disciples might be immersed; but the Scripture informs us that the Spirit was poured out *upon the disciples*,—thus holding forth to all ages the solemn act of baptism without immersion.

(d) Pentecostal baptism teaches authoritatively the great lesson that immersion is not of the essence of the ordinance. On the day of Pentecost, God exemplified a “real baptism;” but there was “no dipping.” This baptism, most dignified in itself, and most momentous to the interests of the Church, the Great Head of Zion took under his own immediate superintendence. Why, then, did not he who possesses all power, administer the *real baptism* with the emblems of the Spirit, by a *real dipping* into the emblems of the Spirit? However we may account for it, the fact is undeniable. One reason appears to be, that in the eye of infinite wisdom, the Christian Church, at the very hour of her nativity, needed an impressive lesson against the encroaching tendency of modes and forms. The day of Pentecost bore witness to God’s estimate of the necessity immersion in baptism. It told the disciples, it tells the world, that Jesus Christ fulfilled his promise to baptize with the Holy Spirit, by an observance in which the act of dipping had neither lot nor part, and mode of any kind occupied a very subordinate position. The lesson thus taught we are not disposed to confine to one denomination of Christians. Were any sect to advocate pouring or sprinkling, as the exclusive mode, and to identify it with the essence of baptism, we should regard that sect as embracing views equally limited and erroneous with the creed of those who are inces-

santly ringing in our ears the oracular *dictum*, that baptism is immersion, and nothing but immersion is baptism.

3. We request attention to some additional circumstances, calculated to illustrate the construction of βαπτίζω with the dative. Every one feels that there is a marked difference between dipping in water, and baptizing with water. The former refers to a definite mode, which is one and unalterable; the latter, while it brings before us a certain religious ordinance, is manifestly compatible with diversity of administration. That the exegesis which cannot bind the ordinance to modal exclusiveness, is sustained by the Spirit's baptism, has been demonstrated in our preceding inquiries. Now, it is a fact that the record of water baptism presents exactly the same construction;—βαπτίζω ἐν πνεύματι, *I baptize with the Spirit*, being the one formula; and βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι, *I baptize with water*, the other. Professor Stuart is very decided with respect to the import of this construction. "When the dative," he observes, "is used after the verb, either with or without a preposition, the expression does not designate the *manner* of the baptism, but only the kind of element by which this baptism is effected." And again, with the exception of Mark i. 9, "We may say, in all other cases in the New Testament, the mode of baptism is left undetermined by the original Greek, so far as the language itself is concerned, unless it is necessarily implied by the word βαπτίζω; for in all other cases, only the *element by which*, not the *mode in which*, baptism is performed, is designated by the sacred writers."

Having already examined so fully what is implied in βαπτίζω, we consider it superfluous to renew that part of the investigation. We firmly reiterate the conclusion, to which a variety of decisive examples has conducted us, to the effect, that the verb is employed with a latitude of meaning which forbids us to force the sense of dipping upon a reluctant construction.

To baptize with water is both sense and grammar; to dip with water would be regarded as barbarous or unmeaning. This remark enables us to perceive how far Baptist writers are supported in their appeal, on behalf of dipping, to the German translation of the Scriptures by Luther. The illustrious reformer, we admit, was prejudiced in favour of that mode of baptism, and expressed a desire for its adoption in the church which he had been the instrument of organizing. Under these circumstances, the construction which he deliberately sanctioned, furnishes a triumphant answer to those who found an argument for immersion on the German rendering of βαπτίζω. *Tauffen*, say our opponents, means *to dip*, being as completely modal as the Greek verb of which it is the representative. This may be true; but it is equally so, that the German word, like the English *baptize*, has acquired a greater latitude of application. This is shown by the connection in which Luther places the verb. His formula is—*Tauffen mit wasser*, to baptize *with*, not *in*, water; and thus, in defiance of his predilections in favour of dipping, his translation recognises the correct Greek construction. It may be stated, in passing, that this prince of Reformers did not insist on mode as essential to the ordi-

nance, and also that the Lutheran Church shared not the preference for immersion entertained by its distinguished founder.

4. In the majority of New Testament baptisms, the probabilities are decidedly against administration by immersion. We feel, and shall endeavour to make it apparent, that in the instances of baptism recorded by evangelists and apostles, the hypothesis of exclusive immersion labours under serious, if not insurmountable, difficulties. To the magnitude of these difficulties, it is evident, Dr. Carson was not insensible ; but he held them to be of no avail in opposition to what he regarded as the uniform and accredited sense of βαπτίζω. Convinced, as we are, on the other hand, that the verb is employed again and again where there is *no dipping*, and *no possibility* of dipping, we distinctly maintain, not only that circumstantial evidence is admissible, but that it cannot be lawfully refused. The question of mode is an open one, and we hold the probabilities of the case entitled to a candid and dispassionate hearing. This position may expose us to obloquy. We may be charged with assailing an institution of our Lord, or impiously labouring to release conscience from Christian obligation. Instead of meeting such charges with protestations of innocence, good intention, and so forth, we simply state that we are producing another branch of the evidence, which goes to prove that, in regard to mode, the baptism of Scripture is less hide-bound than the baptism of our opponents.

The chief points of probability, to which we would solicit attention, are connected with the *places* of New



Testament baptism, the *circumstances* of many to whom it was administered, and the great *numbers* of the baptized.

(1.) The *places* in which the ordinance was dispensed throw formidable obstacles in the way of immersion. Making every allowance for our own ignorance, and the silence of the sacred narrative, we conceive we have still materials here for the construction of a strong probability. Let the value of each circumstance be fairly estimated, and let no argument, positive or presumptive, be pressed a hair's breadth beyond the boundaries of "truth and soberness."

(a) The argument for immersion founded on the *places*, has always appeared to us to be feebleness personified. Yet that Baptists do allege this consideration in their own favour is unquestionable. How stand the facts of Scripture history? Out of nine or ten localities specified in the New Testament, as the scenes of the administration of baptism, only two, Aenon and the Jordan, possessed a liberal supply of water. This fact will be found to grow in importance, the more it is pondered, especially in connection with the efforts of Baptist writers to turn it to the account of immersion. Had the Scripture instances uniformly associated the ordinance with "much water," or had this condition been realized in the majority of cases, their argument would have been plausible, if not convincing. But the divine record presents the reverse of all this. *Much* water is the exception, *little* water the rule. The ordinance could indeed be administered in the river Jordan, and at the many streams of Aenon; but so simple was

the rite, that its performance appears to have been equally convenient in a private house, a prison, or a desert. If, then, the volume of the Jordan is requisite to pour vigour into the Baptist argument for immersion, how sapless and feeble must that argument become, when its nutriment is drawn from the stinted supply of a prison, or the thirsty soil of a wilderness? The very stress laid on the small minority of instances apparently favourable to immersion, certifies for the strength of the opposing view, which claims for its basis the decided and overwhelming majority.

(*b*) In reading the New Testament, we are impressed with the perfect facility of administering baptism in all variety of circumstances. When residents in Jerusalem believe, they are instantly baptized. When inhabitants of Samaria turn to the Lord, they are at once received into Christian fellowship by the same sacred rite. As the Apostles go from house to house, and travel from city to city, wherever there are converts, baptism is administered promptly, and without any apparent inconvenience. To the universality of this statement, so far as we are aware, there exists no exception. Let the character and bearing of this general fact be candidly estimated. Will truth permit the assumption that the cities and houses, within the range of Apostolic labour, were more copiously supplied with water, than cities and houses among ourselves at the present day? Some ancient cities, we are aware, both Eastern and Western, could assert their superiority; but that the average supply was greater over the entire field of primitive evangelization, few will be disposed to affirm. If, then,

the matter were put to the test of experiment, would not the administration of baptism, by dipping, in numerous places and houses, be attended with difficulties almost insuperable? Would it not, in many instances, be impracticable to immerse a convert instantly, and on the spot? Yet, in New Testament baptisms, the administration, in every variety of scene and circumstance, wears the appearance of the most perfect ease and convenience. It must be remembered, too, that during this early age, there were no houses of worship, no baptisteries, and, in a word, no ecclesiastical facilities for immersion.

2. The *circumstances* of many of the baptized appear totally inconsistent with the idea of immersion. A native of Judea resorts to the ministry of John the baptist, and conscience-stricken by the preaching of that faithful man, is prompted to join the ranks of his disciples. When he left his home, he had no more thought of baptism, than of undertaking a voyage round the world. It would be, therefore, preposterous to suppose that he had made any preparation for an observance, which could not possibly have entered into his previous calculations. Curiosity may have drawn him to the forerunner of Messiah; but before returning, he feels it a solemn duty to be baptized “in the name of him who was to come.” The description does not present the case of a solitary individual—like a general term it embraces its tens of thousands. Now, on the hypothesis of immersion, we take leave to ask, were such parties *dressed* or *undressed*, in submitting to the ordinance? The question is a plain one, and should be

met with a plain answer. It suggests the only practicable alternative, of baptism with their garments on, or baptism in a state of nudity; for no one will imagine that the audience of John came to his ministrations, provided with the bathing dresses of modern Baptists. Let our opponents bring to the rescue of their system, from this matter-of-fact dilemma, a spirit of manly candor and Christian moderation. Dogmatism will not serve the purpose. Arising out of simple practical details, the difficulty cannot be removed by supercilious theorizing, or the lofty announcement of general principles and laws of philology.

The adverse cause does not gain in credibility, when we apply the same illustration to the public baptism of females. The modesty and retiring character of woman, as reflected in Eastern customs, must have forbidden the exposure of public immersion. From Lightfoot, on Mat. iii. 6, we learn that when Proselyte baptism was administered to a female, the Rabbis who rehearsed to her the precepts of the law, while she remained in the water, retired as she immersed her head, leaving her in sole charge of attendants of her own sex. She was not, in fact, baptized by the ministers of the Jewish sanctuary,—the hand of man was not permitted to press even her head beneath the water; and hence such proselytes were said to have baptized themselves. Can we reconcile with the feelings of delicacy which dictated this course of extreme reserve, the supposition of men and women publicly, not to say promiscuously, submitting to baptism by immersion in the Jordan? Do we not instinctively recoil from the idea of connecting a



practice so indecent, with the purest and most refined system of moral conduct ever promulgated to the world? If the difficulties of the case, as they will crowd on every reflective mind, are not insuperable, we ask, with all sincerity, how are they to be overcome? Was immersion the mode?—were the females dipped in their ordinary garments?—or how?

We know the administration of that ecclesiastical antiquity to which the immersionist so fondly appeals. The testimony of Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Chrysostom, place it beyond controversy, to use the language of Stuart, “that all candidates for baptism, men, women, and infants, were completely divested of all their garments, in order to be baptized.” Having adduced, in detail, patristic evidence of the reality and prevalence of this revolting procedure, Stuart concludes in these words:—“Enough of this most unaccountable of all the practices of the ancient Church. I am ready to thank God, for the honour of the Christian religion, that the New Testament contains no intimation of such a usage; *nor even any of the earlier fathers*. How it was possible that it could prevail, is a problem of difficult solution.” Yet, on the hypothesis that baptism was uniformly administered by immersion, the usage in question must have been often merely a choice of difficulties; as dipping, without divesting themselves of their garments, would, in many instances, have been an operation equally uncomfortable, and dangerous to health.

3. The large numbers to whom baptism was administered must have rendered immersion difficult, if not

impracticable. This branch of the argument is ably sustained in Mr. Godwin's *Christian Baptism*, pp. 82, 83. The historical facts on which it rests, are mainly collected from the record of the administration of the ordinance by John the baptist. Though it is confessedly impossible to ascertain the exact number of persons, who embraced the doctrine, and submitted to the baptism, which John preached, yet that they constituted a great multitude is the invariable conviction of every reader of the Gospel narrative. In the interpretation of popular language, intended to convey a general idea, statements of an indefinite or apparently universal character, we admit, are not to be pushed to the full extent of their literal meaning. But, making due allowance for this principle, we are still satisfied that great masses of the people were contemplated in the affirmation that "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized by John." Whether—with Mr. Thorn, in his *Modern Immersion not Christian Baptism*, we estimate these masses at two millions, or content ourselves with a more moderate computation, it seems obvious that the rite was of very simple and easy performance. Mr. Godwin reduces the probable numbers of the baptized to three hundred thousand—an estimate sufficiently low—and yet shows that their immersion by one man must have covered a period of ten or twelve years, "supposing him to have been engaged every day in this laborious and unhealthy occupation." When we consider these numbers, coupled with the fact, that John's ministry lasted not more than a year, we are forced to conclude that it would

have been physically impossible for him to administer baptism to "Jerusalem, all Judea, and the region round about Jordan," as it is administered by our modern immersionists.

The baptism of three thousand in one day by the Apostles, must have appeared to Abraham Booth a very formidable difficulty, when he attempted its removal or mitigation, by the following singular parallels.—"Mr. John Fox informs us, that Austin the monk 'baptized and christened *ten thousand* Saxons, or Angles, in the West river, that is called Swale, beside York, on a christmas day.'" Another instance from Robertson's *History of South America*.—"A single clergyman baptized in one day above *five thousand* Mexicans, and did not desist till he was so exhausted by fatigue, that he was unable to lift up his hands." These feats, however, were completely eclipsed by the *dipping* energies of Francis Xavier, among the Indians, who, if we may credit the testimony of Salmero, "baptized *fifteen thousand* in one day." To what order of mind, we ask, can these extravaganzas afford satisfaction? The man who receives them will require no preparation for swallowing the absurd miracles performed by all the saints in the Romish calendar. Does Mr. Booth really mean to affirm that Xavier immersed with his own hands fifteen thousand in one day? No; for he does not credit the fable himself. Was it then warrantable to employ, for the removal of a difficulty arising out of Scripture truth, a mere legend,—a statement which the author manifestly regarded as incredible? It is not by such elucidations that Christian doctrine and ordinances can be

cleared of obscurity, and commended to the acceptance of earnest and truth-loving minds.

Booth's Mexican and Indian baptisms are exposed to another fatal objection. Unless administered by immersion, it is evident, they could not serve the author's purpose; and in appealing to them, he plainly assumes that they were so administered. Now, what is the fact? These baptisms occurred under the agency of Rome, at a period when baptism by affusion prevailed almost universally in the Western Church; and as the missionaries of Rome were not distinguished for imposing on their converts a burdensome ritual, we submit, that in these cases the hypothesis of immersion is utterly groundless. The difficulty, therefore, with regard to the multitude of the baptized, still remains a difficulty, which the immersionist, so far as we can perceive, has discovered no practicable means of surmounting.

We take leave of this section by simply reminding the reader that the argument against immersion, founded on *places*, *circumstances*, and *numbers*, is strictly cumulative, and must consequently be viewed as a whole, in order to comprehend its character, and feel its cogency.

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III. Figurative applications of βαπτίζω, including strictures on the principles and reasonings of leading Baptist writers, in the interpretation of such passages as 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; and 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22.

We enter upon this part of the inquiry with the fullest admission, that, in ascertaining the meaning of



a term, it would be culpably unsafe to elevate mere figure into a standard, to which the literal sense is to be bent or accommodated. Tropical applications cannot legitimately lie at the basis of interpretation, much less supersede a meaning which is grammatically and historically established.

This admission, however, does not warrant the inference, that the province of figurative language is entirely subordinate and servile. A figure may serve to confirm the literal acceptance, where its evidence is defective; and it is even competent to preserve and prove that acceptance. The character of figure sustains our statement. When we employ a term figuratively, the literal sense is recognised, not indeed as a reality addressed to the judgment, but as a picture intended for the imagination, and conveying the impression in a manner calculated at once to instruct and gratify. Thus, the term serpents, applied tropically by our Saviour to the Scribes and Pharisees, still retains its literal sense; and it is this sense, in fact, which invests with significance, and force, and rhetorical beauty, the awful denunciation. The correctness of this view is instantly appreciable in the event of external objects furnishing the materials of our figured representations; but when the interpreter has to deal with actions, or with conceptions of the mind, conveyed through the medium of tropical language, the relation between letter and figure may not be so easily discernible. Not that we consider the difficulty very perplexing. A moderate share of hermeneutical sagacity, we are convinced, will suffice for eliciting from any example of figure, in whatever department it

may be found, the same implied recognition of the grammatical sense as its foundation. On the general topic to which these observations refer, see Glassii *Philologia Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 813, ed. Dath.

To reduce to modal unity the literal meaning of βαπτίζω, we have shown to be an undertaking which no immersionist has hitherto been able to accomplish. *Dipping* has been proved to be too narrow for *baptism*, when both terms are expounded literally; and we are now prepared to prove that this general conclusion holds in regard to tropical usage. We fearlessly carry into the region of figure the leading principles which have been established and exemplified in the field of fact. When the verb is constructed with the preposition εἰς, and the word denoting the baptizing element, whether the occurrence is figured or literal, we freely admit that the formula indicates immersion. This construction in the literal sense, though rarely encountered either in the Classics, or New Testament, does yet exist, and may, therefore, constitute the basis of figurative usage. A pertinent instance is furnished by Clemens Alexandrinus, when he speaks of drunkenness baptizing persons—εἰς ὕπνον—into sleep,—a figure the foundation of which is manifestly laid in the act of immersion. The peculiar relation of contact between an object and any baptizing element, which the verb expresses, may be secured in a variety of *modes*, from which that of immersion is by no means excluded; and consequently the tropical application may select sometimes one, and sometimes another for its basis. Against the diversity here affirmed, our leading opponents manfully contend;

but its existence is established by the following testimonies, which we have endeavoured to classify according to their true affinities.

1. Baptism in the sense of overwhelming forms the literal basis of sundry figurative applications. We had occasion to notice this usage in the Septuagint rendering of Isa. xxi. 4; and in the writings of Plato;—and we now produce other examples in which the connection tends to render the fundamental idea clearer and more prominent. Chrysostom speaks of persons who were —πολλοῖς πανταχόθεν βαπτιζόμενοι πραγμάτων κύμασι— “baptized by numerous waves of business from all quarters.” The language presents a strong figure of easy comprehension. Our imaginations are pointed to the victim of hopeless toil, as a man overwhelmed by a formidable succession of billows. This circumstance of repetition, implied in the term κύμασι, we consider essential to the right understanding of the author’s meaning. Had the effect been traced to a solitary wave, the Baptist might have argued that the expression was intended to convey the idea of immersion into the deep by the force of the wave. But the exposure of the object to a succession of billows appears to present to the mind an image of a very different character. It is not dipping, but overwhelming, which is thus figuratively indicated. The waves sweeping on successively administer the destructive baptism, and themselves constitute the baptizing element. The case is one of overwhelming, and not of immersion. Accordingly, sound disinterested scholarship, both in the patristic and classical department, expounds the figure

on the principle to which we have referred. Thus, SUICER in his *Thesaurus*, renders the passage,—“*Negotiorum undis undiquaque obruti;*” and the same image is similarly rendered from the Greek by AST, in his *Lexicon Platonium*.

The meaning for which we contend will be brought out more distinctly, by canvassing an example from Plutarch's *Treatise on Education*.—“As plants,” he observes, “are nourished by moderate, but choked by too copious watering; in like manner the mind is strengthened by labours commensurate with its powers, but—βαπτίζεταί—is baptized by such as are excessive.” Dr. Carson maintains against Ewing, that in the former part of this simile there is no allusion to *pouring*, as the customary mode of watering plants; and he also affirms that the effect could be equally produced by dipping the plants in water, and allowing them to remain there. “The plants are injured,” says he, “when water is suffered to lie about them in too great abundance, in whatever way it has been applied.” Supposing this view to be substantially correct, we ask, what is there to hinder its extension to the second part of Plutarch's fine image? In the case of choking the plants, if the effect alone is contemplated in the figure, must we not, on the same principle, limit the representation to the effect alone, apart from all reference to *mode*, in the case of the baptism of the mental powers? This is more than insinuated by Dr. Carson, when he states, that “the author compares the *choking of a plant*, or the extinction of vegetable life, to the *choking*, or the extinction of the *mental powers*.” Mode is here uncere-



moniously dismissed from both sides of the simile; while the most superficial glance at the passage will suffice to discover, that the choking of the mental powers is not Plutarch's idea, but Dr. Carson's.

A more important view of the figure seems to have escaped the acumen of this critic. By looking carefully into the passage, we perceive that the too copious watering sustains to the plants the same relation as the excessive labour to the mental faculties. The plants are *choked* by the watering; the mind is baptized by the labour. In the destruction of the plants the simile presents no element but water; and in the baptism of the mental powers it records no agency but that of excessive labour. These points being accurately noted, we are prepared to inquire into the precise action which constituted the figurative baptism. The mind is *baptized*—*ῥίπτο*—*by* too much labour:—but is it dipped or immersed? If so, there must be some other element expressed or understood, into which excessive toil immerses the mind. No such element, however, is expressed, and the mutual relations of the two parts of the simile do not appear to admit of its being understood,—the water being the sole element in the one instance, and in the other, the labour. Unless, therefore, we fall into the absurdity of assuming that the excessive labour dips the mental powers into itself, we are manifestly shut up to the alternative of *overwhelming*. In this baptism the mind is not figured as immersed into any element; but the element is figured as coming upon it or around it, so as to accomplish its destruction. Under this view, the simile exhibits some interesting

points of resemblance to the Pentecostal baptism, which consisted not in the immersion of the Apostles into the emblems of the Spirit, but in these emblems coming upon the Apostles in the upper room where they were assembled.

By the line of observation now traversed, we are guided to a right understanding of many analogous examples. Chrysostom and Justin speak of baptism—ὕπὸ μέθης or μέθῃ—*by drunkenness*,—a figure which equally demands for its literal basis the sense of *being overwhelmed*. To the tropical use of βαπτίζω, to denote intoxication, Dr. Carson fancies he has discovered a complete parallel in the corresponding acceptation of the Latin *Sepelio*, as in Virgil's beautiful verse ;—

Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam.—

“They attack the city *buried* in sleep and wine.” But ὕπὸ μέθης βαπτίσθεις exhibits a construction which is inconsistent with the alleged parallelism, and cannot be rendered *dipped in drunkenness*, but evidently conveys the idea of being baptized (overwhelmed) by drunkenness. Besides, learned controversialists should remember that, whatever may be the comparative poverty of the Latin language, it possesses more than one figure for intoxication. *Madidum vino* found among others in Plautus, and denoting *moist* or *drenched with wine*, conveys an image which we hold to be more closely allied to the Greek—ὕπὸ μέθης βαπτίσθεις. The two figures are not, indeed, identical, the one presenting drunkenness under the idea of an object thoroughly pervaded and moistened by a fluid, while the other, in order to

give vivid expression to the same thought, exhibits the fluid as overwhelming its unhappy victim.

We refer of course to the same class, and are prepared to expound on the same principle, the figurative use of βαπτίζω, in relation to the oppressive or overwhelming burden of debts, taxes, and, indeed, of calamities in general. In effecting even an apparent reconciliation between this tropical usage and his favourite system, Dr. Carson is compelled to resort to a considerable variety of terms, such as *plunge*, *immerse*, *bury*, and especially *sink*, which last often performs a very important part in keeping his theory afloat. As for plain *dip*, even his critical powers seem to have despaired of carrying it through the varied phases and applications of a figurative baptism.

2. Christian antiquity makes us acquainted with a figurative use of baptism, founded on the literal sense of pouring or affusion. To what extent this usage may involve departure from the radical, or even ordinary meaning of the verb, is not the question,—the interpreter being concerned with the simple reality as it is found in ancient documents. An example, furnishing the rare combination of the *proper* with the *tropical*, has already come under our consideration, in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to the aspect under which it is contemplated, the Pentecostal baptism is a figure, or a reality. Viewed in relation to the *emblems of the Spirit*, it is a “real baptism,” as Dr. Carson himself maintains;—and this baptism we have proved to be by affusion. Viewed in relation to the Spirit *personally*, it is a figurative baptism; and affusion, as we have shown,

forms the foundation of the figure. From baptism with the emblems of the Spirit (Acts i. 5 ; ii. 1-3,) immersion was utterly excluded ; yet that transaction challenges our regards as the most exalted and effective baptism which it is competent for God to administer, or for man to receive, on the terms of the covenant of redemption.

In the patristic enumeration of baptisms, we find two which clearly belong to the figurative department, the one designated a baptism by blood, the other by tears. The baptism by blood the fathers regard as exemplified in the sufferings and death of our Saviour, and in the early martyrdoms of Christianity. With this acceptation the term occurs in Mark x. 38, "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Also in Luke xii. 50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" What is the mode of this baptism ? That exposure to crushing calamities is often represented under the figure of sinking in deep waters, of descending into "pits and darksome caves," we are fully aware ; and the Bible is perfectly familiar with this species of terrible imagery. It is possible, therefore, that the baptism of blood and martyrdom may not so entirely exclude the idea of immersion, as some writers have imagined. In endeavouring to reach the foundation of the figure, and comprehend the principle upon which it should be interpreted, we shall confidently avail ourselves of the lights of Christian antiquity.

The fathers, as on most other points, vary in their explanations of the baptism by blood. In the instance



of our Saviour, the great majority appear to regard it as receiving the name of baptism from the efficacy of his death, to accomplish a spiritual washing or purification. Theophylact on Mat. xx. 22, and Mark x. 38, says, "Christ calls his cross or his death a baptism, because it purifies us all, or purges away our sin." Chrysostom observes, in Hom. LXXV., that, "as the baptized are washed with water, so the martyred are washed with their own blood." These extracts indicate what seems to have been the prevailing view, and they are highly important in guiding to a correct knowledge of the baptism by blood. Patristic literature, it is obvious, did not generally associate this baptism with the idea of sinking in distress and death. It was an image altogether different which the language presented to the mind of early Christianity; and hence we should be slow to adopt the Baptist interpretation of the figure, contrary to the understanding of writers to whom Greek with all its imagery and peculiarities was vernacular. We have admitted that the testimony of the fathers on this point is not uniform; but that circumstance, be it remembered, cannot affect our reasonings, though it must prove fatal to the views of those who maintain that βαπτίζω, through all its occurrences, literal and figurative, denotes nothing but immersion.

Another testimony of Chrysostom, from the same Homily (LXXV.) will more fully illustrate this figurative baptism in its general bearing. "Wonder not," says he, "that I call martyrdom a baptism, for *there* also the Spirit descends in rich abundance, and there is the remission of sins, and an amazing and incredible

purification of soul.” In this language the baptism by blood is associated, not with the idea of sinking in calamity, much less with any effect produced by the literal shedding of blood,—but directly with the abundant gifts of the Spirit, and with pardon and purification. In effect, it seems to contain a tacit allusion to the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in that great emblematical manifestation, by which the infant Church was so divinely refreshed and invigorated.

It may be questioned whether some of the fathers do not understand literally the baptism by blood, as denoting the effusion of the martyr’s blood upon his own person. Thus, Cyril of Jerusalem, as cited by Dr. Halley, says,—“ The Saviour, when his side was pierced, poured forth blood and water, because in times of peace men would be baptized with water, in times of persecution *with their own blood*.” As a literal baptism, this is self-evidently incompatible with immersion. Dr. Carson holds it to be an impossibility in fact, and an absurdity in speech, to dip a lake in the blood of a frog; and the attempt to immerse a man in his own blood would on trial prove equally unsuccessful. Yet, the Greek fathers must have used language which was perfectly intelligible and proper, when they spoke, as frequently they did, of the martyr being baptized with his own blood. The majority of such allusions we hold to be tropical; but in some instances it appears difficult to assign satisfactory reasons for departure from the literal exegesis.

Baptism by tears is another figure well known in the church of the fathers, and its import demands from us

only a passing notice. No one conversant with patristic language will be disposed to harbour the idea that this baptism was intended to convey the extravagant image of a penitent immersed in his own tears. "The sprinkling of clean water," spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, is repeatedly applied to *baptism*, by Theodoret, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa, and others;—will any Baptist on this ground essay the identification of *sprinkling* with *immersion*? The accomplishment of the enterprise will involve a Hermeneutical miracle; yet it may be boldly undertaken by the author who has "made full proof" of his competency to extract dipping from the baptism by tears.

3. Our attention is solicited by the evidence contained in 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The character of Israel's baptism on this occasion is still contested, some alleging it to be an instance of figure, while others argue for the literal interpretation. Without figure the cause of our opponents is indefensible, inasmuch as there was no real immersion of the tribes in cloud and sea; yet some Baptist authors are valorous enough not to shrink from the letter of the Apostle's declaration. In his recent work on *Christian Discipleship and Baptism*, in reply to Dr. Halley, by the Rev. Charles Stovel of London, the writer holds language which is inconsistent with a figurative exegesis. "When the nation," says Mr. Stovel, p. 70, "was baptized, initiated into Moses, being

immersed in cloud and sea, they entered under an authority, the exercise of which was destined to secure the glory of the God to whom they were subject." As a specimen of sacred Hermeneutics, this comment presents a very unfavourable view of the author's acquaintance with language, and of his powers of discrimination. He first identifies the *baptism* of the text with *initiation* into Moses; and next he proceeds to apply it in the same occurrence to a supposed *immersion* in cloud and sea! No sound interpreter will need to be told that this is most unwarrantable. In expounding the term *baptized*, Mr. Stovel may make his election between *initiated* and *immersed*; but to represent βαπτίζω as standing for both, and doing two-fold duty in the same instance, is arbitrary and apocryphal. It is disowned by the canon of interpretation. Still the dexterity of the author is not altogether causeless: for had he honestly announced to us that the fathers of the Jewish church were *dipped into Moses*, in cloud and sea, the doctrine would scarcely have gone down even with the most resolute immersionist. Besides, the expression, "immersed in cloud and sea," which he appears manifestly to employ in a literal sense, is in direct antagonism to the record of facts in the book of Exodus. It is not true that the Israelitish fathers were *immersed in cloud and sea*, and hence this part of the exposition, destitute of a historic basis, is groundless or fanciful.

Dr. Carson's comment on the passage evinces, as may be expected, more learning and acumen; yet it bristles with inconsistencies which we defy mortal ingenuity to



reconcile. We learn from him that Israel's passage through the Red Sea "is figuratively called a baptism," while he subsequently asserts that "it was a real immersion," and even undertakes to specify the elements and actions which composed the strange reality. Now, if it was a *real* immersion, and if, as the author stiffly maintains, immersion and baptism are synonymous, it follows demonstrably that it was a *real baptism*. Again, Dr. Carson affirms that the passage through the sea is figuratively called baptism, because of "external similarity" to the Christian ordinance, and "because it serves the like purpose," and "figures the same event." But if it constituted of itself a real baptism, apart from all foreign considerations, why should it be compelled to borrow that name from an institution of the New Testament? As a real immersion, it is entitled, on the ground of its own intrinsic character, to demand the designation of baptism; and, therefore, it will not consent to become a mendicant at the door of Christianity, for that which is its own inherent and inalienable right. Baptism and dipping, however, maugre all the strong affirmations to the contrary, are not always identified by our opponents; nay, are sometimes as emphatically distinguished from each other, as the most devoted advocate of sprinkling or affusion could desire. When Dr. Carson informs us that "the Israelites, by being *under* the cloud, and passing through the sea, were baptized into Moses," is it not obvious that he uses the term *baptized* in an appropriated acceptation, of which *dip* or *immerse* does not form the true exponent? Let the substitution be tried;—"The Israelites, by being

under the cloud, &c., were *dipped into Moses!*”—and will not common discernment instantly recognise the wide difference between these two expressions of pretended identity?

Dr. Carson's attempt to give the Israelites a *real dip* at the Red Sea is more amusing in itself than compatible with the facts of Scripture history. “The sea,” he says, “stood on each side, and the cloud covered them.” From what source he derived this piece of intelligence we know not; but in vain have we searched for it in the writings of Moses and Paul. The former represents the pillar of cloud as *behind* the Israelites during their whole passage through the sea, its dark frown fixed on the pursuing Egyptians; and though Paul asserts that the fathers were under the cloud, he is not pledged to the gloss that this occurred simultaneously with their passing through the sea. Dr. Carson's view of this baptism is, in fact, a conceit for which there exists no foundation either in the *Pentateuch* or the *Epistle*. He admits, indeed, that “it was not a literal immersion in water;” but the admission is one which no disputant who understands his business will accept. The Red Sea baptism *was not a literal immersion in any thing*,—it was no immersion at all. The fathers of the Jewish Church were *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; but the recorded facts of the case stand insuperably and for ever opposed to the hypothesis of their *immersion*.

Dr. Wardlaw, animadverting on the Baptist view of this passage, had expressed surprise at the idea of “a dry baptism;”—to which Dr. Carson replied, “Be

patient, Dr. Wardlaw : was not the Pentecost baptism a dry baptism?" The reply is unworthy of a sound and critical thinker. The Pentecost transaction was a dry baptism, because tongues as of fire, and the sound as of rushing wind—the emblems employed in its administration—were dry. But if the Israelites had a real baptism *in the sea*, there would have been *no dryness there*. Still more unfortunate is this author's attempt at illustrating Israel's national baptism by an alleged parallel from Campbell's Ode on the battle of Hohenlinden. The poet sings—

Few, few shall part where many meet;  
The snow shall be their winding-sheet.

"Would any Goth," cries the Doctor, "object that the snow cannot be a winding-sheet, because it does not wind round the whole body of the dying soldier? And is he not a Goth who says that the Israelites could not be buried or immersed in the sea, because they were not covered with the water?" Fearless of hard names from tongue or pen, we feel bound to stamp this as one of the least judicious specimens of criticism, sacred or profane, which it has been our lot to encounter. Are the pencillings of Thomas Campbell's fancy to be placed on a level with the eternal verities of the word of God? Is the lyrical conversion of snow into a winding-sheet to be accepted as a parallel to the solemnly recorded fact of Israel's baptism in the cloud and in the sea? Had the poet, with all the gravity of an old Chronicler, informed his readers that the slain "on Linden" were all buried in winding-sheets, the announcement would

have doubtless startled many a lover of the marvellous ; and if whetted curiosity had afterwards discovered that these winding-sheets were formed of snow-drifts, all, except Goths, must have felt marvellously edified by so pure a specimen of the sublime. The truth is, that Campbell's pleasing fiction is wholly uncongenial to the weighty fact contained in the narrative of Paul ;—the Hohenlinden winding-sheet supplying either to Goth or Greek, no elucidation whatever of the Red Sea baptism.

In Scripture exegesis, we do not object to figured parallels borrowed from the poetry of ancient or modern times. Far be it from us to place under bann the beautiful models of classic antiquity—those exquisite developments of Greek and Roman mind. Nor would we interdict judicious reference to any branch of that splendid imagery which has grown up in unpruned luxuriance under an Eastern sky. These are fountains which must remain unsealed ; while, at the same time, care should be taken that they send healthy streams through the region of biblical exposition. Still we should consider it singular, were an interpreter of Scripture to find his richest harvest of illustration in the field of literary fiction,—were Homer, Virgil, or the modern poets to honour largely his drafts on their stock of parallels, while the great masters in history, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, and those who now wear their mantles, appeared in a condition bordering on literary bankruptcy. This state of things we could, however, fully appreciate, if with De Wette, we believed the Pentateuch to be the great epic poem of the Hebrew nation !



It is difficult to ascertain the precise physical action, which took place in the baptism of Israel at the Red Sea. There was no immersion in the waters of the sea, nor any dipping in the cloud. There was no immersion, properly so called, in any baptizing element whatever, yet there was a real baptism; for the Spirit of God explicitly and solemnly testifies "that all our fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the Sea."

With the view to rescue their system from the difficulty in which this passage involves it, our opponents commonly resort to figure, which some of them employ in a manner closely corresponding to Semler's principle of accommodation. Booth, for instance, maintains that "the term baptized is here used merely by way of allusion," and that "as the allusive acceptance of a word should never be made the standard of its literal and proper sense, it must be very incongruous to produce this passage in favour of sprinkling." What does Mr. Booth mean by his "*allusive* acceptance?" Does he mean to charge the Apostle with accommodating the Red Sea transaction to the conceptions of baptized Christians, by the use of a term which was not legitimately or correctly applicable? It may be replied that the worthy author simply intended to represent the baptism in cloud and sea, as symbolical of the initiatory rite of the Christian Church. But this by no means removes the difficulty. If Israel's baptism pointed out typically the Christian ordinance, that circumstance cannot be regarded as denuding the type of the character and reality predicated of it by the Apostle. When the fathers "did eat manna in the wilderness," the act

symbolized the participation of spiritual blessings ; but its use as a symbol did not convert the eating of the manna into an unreal, imaginative process. It was still eating. Just so with the baptism at the Red Sea. That it formed a type or exhibited a figure of New Testament baptism, may be admitted, without in the slightest degree, affecting its own character as an ordinance administered to the Israelitish nation, under circumstances peculiarly impressive. Whatever the transaction may be employed to symbolize, it remains a solemn fact, attested by the Apostle, that “ our fathers were *baptized* in the cloud and in the sea,”—and a solemn fact, sustained by Moses, that they were *not immersed* in the cloud and in the sea.

The view which we consider best entitled to reception does not identify the passage of Israel through the sea with their baptism. The Apostle does not identify these two events ; but he distinctly intimates that the baptism in the sea took place during the passage, while his language assigns no specific date to their baptism in the cloud. That sea and cloud were somehow both concerned in this national solemnity the clear declaration of Scripture constrains us to believe. How then was the baptism administered ? To those (and we confess ourselves of their number) who point out spray and rain as the probable agencies employed, Dr. Carson replies,—“ This is quite arbitrary ; for there is nothing said about rain from the cloud, or spray from the sea. It is not in evidence that any such things existed.” This statement is incorrect on a point of the highest importance. We have, indeed, no positive evidence for

the existence of spray ; but from Psalm lxxvii. 16, we learn that, on this very occasion, “the clouds poured out water,” a declaration which makes sure of the existence of rain. And as to spray, though the inspired penmen are silent, yet the “strong east wind,” the “trembling earth,” and the “troubled depths,” afford indubitable presumptions of its existence. Indeed, the thunderstorm, the existence of which *is* in evidence, would to a certainty produce the spray, whose existence is doubted or denied ; and thus the agencies of cloud and sea may have combined in this great baptism.

Whether this account, which we put forward as the most probable, be embraced or rejected, the great facts of the transaction remain fixed and unalterable. Israel’s baptism in the cloud was no dipping in the cloud ;—Israel’s baptism in the sea was no immersion in the sea. There was, indeed, an *immersion* on this awful occasion ; but it was confined exclusively to the host of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen, which “sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

The next passage claiming our attention is 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, in which the sacred writer, referring to Noah’s ark, says,—“Wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. The like figure, whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In the original, baptism is styled the *ἀντίτυπος*, corresponding in its effects to the preservation of Noah and his family, which thus occupies by implication the place of the *τύπος* or type. How is immersion to

be extracted from this language? Does the passage contemplate any resemblance whatever between the *mode* of Noah's preservation by water, and the mode of Christian baptism with water? In the sacred records generally, is the relation between type and antitype of a character so clear and definite, that in regard to the particular example before us, the actions to which these terms are respectively applied, do necessarily exhibit *modal* correspondence? He must be a bold expositor who will undertake to found the supposed necessity upon the *usus loquendi*, as ascertained by the most extensive induction: and if there is no general principle to rule the case, it simply remains for the interpreter to ascertain the meaning, under the guidance of the ordinary laws of exegesis.

That the safety extended to Noah and his family by water, typified the salvation of the Christian by the baptism of the text, is evidently the substance of the Apostolic statement. In both instances, there is deliverance, and both employ the instrumentality of water. These are indisputable points of resemblance; and they abundantly warrant the application of the terms type and antitype. Our opponents, however, are strong for *modal* similarity. "What!" exclaims Dr. Carson, "Noah not immersed, when buried in the waters of the flood? Are there no bounds to perverseness?" Such sentiments are singularly extravagant, as well as unfounded. The fancy of a modern may dip Noah in the waters of the deluge;—it may paint his immersion and burial, as the ark floated gallantly on a shoreless ocean. Very different is the picture presented in God's word.



The Apostle speaks of Noah as *saved by water*, NOT *immersed in water*. There was burial, indeed, and there was immersion, but not for Noah and his family. Noah and his family formed the merciful and solitary exceptions to the immersion and burial of the antediluvian world. Had the Apostle traced an analogy between baptism and the drowning of the ungodly, with what triumph our opponents would have founded upon that analogy their doctrine of exclusive immersion. But when baptism takes for its type, not the destruction of mankind at large, but the safety of Noah, then are they forced to help themselves out of a difficulty, by recourse to figures and fancies designed to meet the exigency of the case. Where do the Scriptures speak of Noah's immersion in water? Nowhere. The patriarch was saved by water—not by immersion in water, but by a divinely appointed means for preventing his immersion. Besides, had mode been prominent before the mind of the Apostle, in his reference to the flood, and to Christian baptism, we should have expected mode to influence his subjoined explanatory statement. When, for instance, he speaks of *baptism now saving us*, had mode stood as high with him as it does with our opponents, he would have necessarily added, “Not the dipping into water,” &c.—Whereas his exegetical words are, “Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” thus evincing, in the clearest manner, that his whole train of association in the passage contemplated merely the cleansing properties of water, as symbolizing spiritual purification.

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#### IV. Refutation of some of the leading objections of the Immersionists.

Burial with Christ by baptism into his death, as referred to in Rom. vi. 3, 4; and Colos. ii. 12, is not unfrequently paraded as a triumphant attestation to the necessity of dipping. We give the words from the *authorized version*.—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The image conveyed in this language is full of meaning and impressiveness; and, therefore, its alleged inconsistency with any mode, except immersion, the more imperatively demands for the passage a thorough critical examination. There are two points of a preliminary nature, to one of which we are prepared to do justice by a spontaneous admission; while for the other we take leave to claim from the Baptist a thorough and equitable consideration.

1. We admit that, on the strength of these passages, the Greek and Latin fathers, very generally regarded baptism as a scenic representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. To produce citations is superfluous. We make the admission on broad and comprehensive grounds, embracing testimonies of early Christian writers, both in the Eastern and Western world.

But to do justice to the subject, we must assign our reasons for attaching little weight to this piece of patristic interpretation. It is well known that in the ages of Christian antiquity, emblem and allegory knew no bounds. Not satisfied with detecting in baptism a symbolical exhibition of burial, the good fathers founded on the supposed frequentative sense of βαπτίζω, the practice of *trine* immersion, which they variously unriddled, some referring it to the three days during which Christ lay in the grave, others to the three persons of the adorable Trinity. Were proof of this necessary, we might appeal to the writings of Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustine, and many others. In process of time, every circumstance connected with baptism formed a symbol. The candidate entered the baptistery by three steps. His descent symbolized the renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh; his ascent, by the same steps, represented his recognition of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Eph. iv. 22, 24, and Colos. iii. 9, 10, the symbolist discovered another baptismal figure. The simple act of the candidate in undressing for baptism denoted *the putting off of the old man*; and after the administration of the ordinance, he was supplied with a new dress of white raiment, in token of *putting on the new man*, and as a type of the celestial robe of fine linen.

This abnormal tendency to multiply and complicate symbols of baptism, we confess, we view with grave suspicion and distrust; and that, in the case before us, it subjects patristic authority to an enormous discount,

will not be generally disputed. For the knowledge of Greek terms and constructions we are content to sit at the feet of the Greek fathers; but when they pour out the treasures of a too exuberant fancy in the exegesis or creation of figures and emblems, as interpreters we must exercise the privilege of seeking for ourselves "a more excellent way."

2. We entreat Immersionists to consider well the grounds on which they hold baptism to symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection of our Saviour. To the mere circumstance that no trace of this symbol is found except in two detached passages, we attach no importance; for with us one explicit declaration of the God of truth is equivalent to a thousand. But we do consider it strange that if baptism had for its leading object the emblematic representation of Christ's burial, that momentous fact should never once enter into the direct teachings of Scripture upon the subject. We peruse the great baptismal commission, we ransack the various examples of its execution by Apostles and their coadjutors; yet in no instance does the divine record breathe a syllable of that scenic exhibition, which enters so largely and essentially into the conceptions of our opponents. On the contrary, the momentous disclosure, if it comes out at all, comes out incidentally in the writings of the Apostle, under the form of an indirect and highly figurative allusion to the ordinance.

But the advocate of symbolic burial in baptism must grapple with other and greater difficulties. When we examine the plain language of Scripture, its staple disclosures point out the ordinance as a figure of spiritual



washing or purification. “It appears to me very evident,” says Wardlaw, “that the emblematic significance of baptism is to be found in the *purifying nature of the element employed in it,—in the cleansing virtue of water*. Almost every instance in which the ordinance is spoken of, or alluded to, with any intimation of its meaning, might be adduced in proof of this. The following passages are but a specimen of many: Acts xxii. 16, ‘And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.’ Eph. v. 25, 26, ‘Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water*, through the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.’ In this latter passage, spiritual purification is no doubt intended; but it contains such an allusion to the ordinance of baptism with water, as leads us to conclude that this spiritual purification is what it is designed principally to represent.—A similar allusion there seems to be in Tit. iii. 5, ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.’”—*Inf. Baptism*, p. 154.

That these passages contain a fair representation of the teachings of Scripture, on the great design of baptism, will not be denied. The fact stands out with instructive prominence on the pages of revelation. If, then, spiritual washing is the leading thought symbolized in water baptism, is it not extremely difficult to

reconcile this view with the representation of the same ordinance under the emblem of a burial? "If we attempt," says Halley, "to unite them, we have before us the ludicrous image of a man washing in a grave, or dying in a bath." We do not now assert that the two emblems, though betraying features of striking incongruity, are absolutely incompatible; because our remarks being preparatory to the interpretation of the contested figure, we dare not employ *a priori* considerations, however weighty, to prejudge the testimony of the Spirit of God. In our mind the case stands simply thus:—the emblematic view of baptism, which has for its basis spiritual cleansing, is established by Scripture testimonies at once pertinent and copious; while the main design of the ordinance under this aspect does not limit its administration to any particular mode. On the other hand, our opponents put forward, with an obtrusiveness and frequency which are certainly unscriptural, another emblematic view which assimilates baptism to burial, and cannot, they aver, be realized unless by immersion. Whether their favourite emblem is supported by sufficient evidence, it is our present business to determine; and in prosecuting the inquiry it will be requisite to sift the character of the alleged symbolic representation.

In Rom. vi. 3, the Apostle says, "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." What are we to understand by *baptism into Jesus Christ*? This point may seem simple or irrelevant, and it has been often overlooked in the discussion; yet we believe it to be so vitally important that

a correct answer to the question must regulate and control the interpretation of the entire passage.

1. We observe, then, that there is no emblem whatever indicated when the Apostle speaks of *baptism into Christ*. Whether, with Vitranga, we understand the words "into Christ," as denoting—*into the acknowledgment of Christ*, or with Tholuck,—*into participation in Christ*, or with Haldane,—*into oneness with Christ*, or with others, including Wardlaw, and probably Carson,—*into the faith of Christ*,—still in none of its patronized or possible varieties is the import symbolically presented in baptism. Haldane has indeed asserted that oneness with Christ "is represented emblematically by baptism;" but the assertion stands alone, unattended alike by evidence or illustration. In our baptism into Christ, where is the emblem of oneness with Christ? Were we even to adopt the uncouth phraseology of *immersion into Christ*, or *dipping into Christ*, still no foundation would be laid for the symbol of alleged unity, inasmuch as the object immersed is not regarded as one with the element into which it is immersed. The Israelites were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, but their baptism furnished no emblematic representation of oneness with Moses. The forerunner of Messiah baptized multitudes into repentance;—was this baptism an *emblem of the oneness of these multitudes with repentance*? In like manner, when we are said to be baptized into Jesus Christ, our baptism is the public recognition and seal of relationship to him; but of that relationship it does not, and, we apprehend, cannot present a symbolic exhibition.

2. *Baptism into Christ's death* can never be fairly construed into an emblem of the death of our Saviour. "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were *baptized into his death*." Our baptism, according to Mr. Maclean, is to be regarded as "exhibiting the *death, burial, and resurrection of Christ*." This, indeed, forms the current language of the Baptist school. It is expressive of one of the distinguishing tenets of their system, and accordingly every successive defence of their views reiterates the dogma that baptism exhibits symbolically the death of Christ. The assertion may impose upon the unthinking, but a little sound reflection will serve to detect the fallacies from which it derives its plausibility.

That some palpable resemblance must exist between an object or action, and the symbol by which it is represented is the dictate of common sense. This condition appears to be indispensable to the very existence of symbol. If the resemblance is not apparent, the symbol has been injudiciously selected; and when there is no resemblance, we have, properly speaking, no symbol at all. Let these principles be wisely and conscientiously applied to the case under review. In baptism by immersion our opponents profess to have discovered a symbol of the death of Jesus Christ. We respectfully ask them to point out the resemblance without which the figure cannot exist. The death which Jesus "accomplished at Jerusalem" was upon the cross, lifted up between heaven and earth. The rite by which it is proposed to symbolize that death is the dipping of a believer into water! *mode* being con-



sidered equally essential to the ordinance and to the symbol. Where is the resemblance? Let Baptists unfold it, if they can. Had the antitype presented an instance of death by drowning, the pretended emblem would have evinced an obvious and impressive correspondence; but what extravagance of fancy will venture to trace in *dipping* such a similarity to *death by crucifixion*, as may constitute the basis of an intelligible emblem?

Will it be alleged, as a forlorn hope, that the sufferings of Christ are compared to floods, which engulf and drown their unhappy victim, and that the Scriptures expressly speak of these sufferings as “a baptism wherewith he was to be baptized?” The objection will not emanate from any one who has learned even the A, B, C, of figurative language. Employed to denote the sufferings of Christ, baptism is itself a figure; and we must not fall into the absurdity of converting it into the figure of a figure! This point Dr. Carson has “settled for ever with all sober men;” and yet without some tropical or other *doubling*, the discovery of modal resemblance between baptism and the death of Christ will not, we predict, reward the hermeneutical labours of the Immersionist. Still, baptism into Christ’s death is no fiction, but an all important truth, the character of which we shall presently have an opportunity of disclosing.

3. When we are said to be buried with Christ by baptism into his death, baptism is not to be interpreted as the symbol of burial. “Therefore,” says the Apostle, v. 4, “we are buried with him by baptism into death,”

that is, “into *his* death,” as Stuart has correctly rendered it, and ably sustained the rendering in his *Commentary*. The relation of this verse to what precedes, and the mutual connection of fact and argument in the passage, have not, so far as we are aware, been placed in the truest or most advantageous light. As a great fundamental fact, the Apostle states, that when we were baptized into Jesus Christ we were baptized into his death. Then follows the assertion, that “we were buried with him,” on which Baptists lay the greatest stress, and which is often placed before the public as if it formed a distinct and conspicuous part of the symbolic process. If their representations are correct, the emblem must be three-fold, embracing *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection*; and unless they emblematically bury a living man, death should precede burial, as burial precedes resurrection. But finding this order of succession impracticable, they mix up and confound death and burial, under the common emblem of immersion.

The symbolic exegesis, thus briefly noticed, we must bring to the touchstone of Apostolic reasoning. “We were baptized,” says Paul, “into Christ’s death. *Therefore* we were buried with him by baptism into his death.” Is the line of argument here obscure or intricate? The Apostle affirms the fact of our baptism into Christ’s death, and thence draws the conclusion that by baptism into his death, we are buried with him.—See Olshausen, Fritzsche, and especially Krehl,—on *Romans*.—Burial with Christ, therefore, is not introduced as an additional fact or circumstance in the baptismal process;

but appears in the shape of a logical result from what had been previously established. The great fact of the passage is baptism into Christ's death, which does not admit of being symbolized by immersion; and grounded on the fact, is the momentous conclusion, that in this baptism we are "joined unto the Lord" in his burial and resurrection. From union with Christ in death, union with him in the grave follows by legitimate and necessary deduction. In the economy of redemption the death of Christ,—the unparalleled event of the Bible and of the universe—is so inseparably connected with his burial, that those who are spiritually united to him in death, must be spiritually united to him in the grave; and whatever recognises our communion with Christ in his death, necessarily involves the recognition of our communion with him in his burial.

The connection of the reasoning, however, forces us somewhat farther. Baptism into Christ's death, according to the plain tenor of the passage, may be considered as placing the baptized party with Christ in his tomb. "We are buried with him *by baptism into his death*;" not by baptism into his grave. But baptism into his death, as we have shown, presents no symbolic representation of the death of Christ. Now, if the modal resemblance, indispensable to symbol, is by the necessity of the case, excluded from baptism into Christ's death, is it not preposterous to look for it in our burial with Christ, which is simply the conclusion drawn from our baptism into his death? If the main fact presents no emblem to our minds, why should an emblem be considered essential in the mere point of inference or

deduction? We demand a warrant, founded on the laws either of sound sense, or philosophical rhetoric, for tracing, in a logical conclusion, a modal emblem, of which there exists no vestige whatever in the premises.

This train of reflection seems to issue in the elaboration of a general principle of some intrinsic value, and calculated to bring about the adjustment of several points in this part of the controversy. The principle is, that *baptism acknowledges and seals* MORE than it *symbolizes*; or, in other words, various *truths* recognised in this ordinance do not form the subject of emblematic representation. Without travelling beyond the range of the Apostolic commission, we can evince and illustrate the soundness of this principle. The command to the primitive heralds of Christianity was, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Here is a momentous revelation of deity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into the faith of which we are baptized; but of the truths thus disclosed baptism furnishes no symbolic exhibition. Mr. Stovel explains the construction of the text, βαπτίζουσιν εἰς, by “initiation,” involving “subjection to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.” But whatever may be its meaning, the passage presents a decisive instance of truths acknowledged and sealed, though not symbolized in baptism. The principle constitutes an efficient safeguard against the tendency of patristic Hermeneutics to enlarge absurdly the territory of allegory and emblem. We are baptized into the faith and



recognition of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but of this the ordinance cannot pretend to contain any modal resemblance; and on the same principle, when we are baptized into the faith of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, why should we imagine a necessity for modal resemblance? In both cases great and invaluable truths are acknowledged, but not symbolized, in baptism. The principle cannot be controverted; and we claim the passages in *Romans* and *Colossians*, as legitimate instances of its application.

These views derive strong collateral support from the following canon, stated and defended by Mr. Stovel, in the appendix to his work on *Christian Discipleship and Baptism*. "The cases in which (εἰς) *into* occur," says this zealous Baptist, "have *all*, in the New Testament, a reference to the action performed by the person baptized." Let us look at Rom. vi. 3, 4, in the light of the *Stovel* canon of interpretation, "So many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death;" that is, on Mr. Stovel's principle, "were baptized in water, entering into Christ's death."—"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death:"—in other words, "by entering into Christ's death, on the occasion of our baptism in water, we are buried with him." It is not baptism in water, as the act of the administrator, that buries us with Christ, but our own entrance into his death, as is clear both from the nature of the principle, and the scope of the passage. This exposition cuts for ever the alleged symbolic connection between the mode of the ordinance and the burial of Christ. "They were immersed,"

says this writer “(entering) into Christ, and such persons must have entered ‘into his death.’” It follows, say we, that the *entrance* and the *baptism* are distinct acts, performed by different parties; while the former alone is available for bringing us into contact with the death and burial of Christ. Mode as a symbol is thus unceremoniously dismissed by high Baptist authority: for so far as this point is concerned, whether “they were *immersed*,” or *sprinkled*, “entering *into* Christ,” the use of water is necessarily bereft of all emblematic significance. When the faith of the candidate enters into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, on Mr. Stovel’s principle, the application of water, in any mode whatever, will equally fulfil all the conditions required by the Apostle’s argument and illustration.

4. The symbolic view of these passages is untenable, on grounds acknowledged and triumphantly defended by Dr. Carson. In discussing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, reference was had to a great principle, on which this author justly places firm reliance, and which we take leave to state in his own words. “Baptism cannot be either *pouring* or *dipping*, for the sake of representing the *manner* of the conveyance of the Holy Spirit; for there is no such likeness. *Pouring of the Spirit* is a phrase which is itself a *figure*, not a *reality* to be represented by a figure.”—*On Baptism*, p. 107. From the principle, thus briefly indicated, it is clear that the author’s doctrine recognises, in the case of every figure, the necessity of a proximate foundation in fact or reality; and we shall discover that it takes a much

wider range than he seems to have contemplated when he applied it to the symbolizing of the Spirit's operations. Whatever is of the nature of reality, and especially of reality cognizable by the senses, will admit of emblematic representation ; and, on the other hand, whatever is itself a figure, we are bound to regard as incapable of such representation. Let the principle be faithfully applied to Rom. vi. 3, 4, and Colos. ii. 12. "Baptism," says Dr. Carson, "is a *figure of the burial and resurrection of Christ*, which may be represented by natural things, because *it (?)* respects the objects of sense." But is not this statement of what baptism, in these verses, symbolizes, if it symbolize any thing, chargeable with gross partiality or unpardonable incorrectness? From Genesis to the Apocalypse there is not a solitary passage of Scripture, which at all warrants the assertion that baptism "is a figure of the burial and resurrection of Christ." The language of the Apostle, in these two *Epistles*, affords it no countenance whatever, as we shall endeavour to demonstrate.

"To be baptized into Christ's death," Dr. Carson correctly observes, "is not merely to be baptized into the faith of his death, but of our own death with him." The same remark applies with equal force to Christ's burial and resurrection, when we are "baptized into Christ's death," "buried with him by baptism into his death," and raised again, the plain meaning is, that in the economy of redemption we are regarded as dead, buried, and risen *with* Christ,—and that baptism points to this intimate and wonderful connection. It is not *simply* the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that

are set forth in the ordinance; but it is *complexly our* death, burial, and resurrection *together with him*. The burial and resurrection of Christ might be doubtless made the subject of symbolic exhibition. But that is not the point. If baptism be designed to furnish a modal emblem of burial and resurrection at all, *it must be of the burial and resurrection of its subjects with Jesus Christ*. That Christ was literally buried, and raised again, we of course admit; but unless *we* were literally buried and raised again *with him*, that united burial and resurrection, on Dr. Carson's own principle, cannot be made the subject of emblematic representation. But our burial with Christ is manifestly a figure, not a literal reality; and hence it follows irresistibly, that without introducing the figure of a figure, it is incapable of being emblematically represented in baptism. "Sprinkling," observes Dr. Carson, "cannot be an emblem of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; because the blood of Christ is not literally sprinkled on the believer." Immersion, he might have added, cannot be an emblem of the believer's burial with Christ, because the believer is not literally buried with Christ. As Dr. Halley has well observed, "the arguments on both sides for symbolizing modes of spiritual things must rise or fall together." With playful, but not groundless, severity, he subjoins,—“I am glad to have the authority of Dr. Carson, that this point is settled for ever with all sober men. How he contrives to make himself an exception, I do not surmise.”

Having admitted that the mass of interpreters, especially among the ancients, expound symbolically the



passages in Romans and Colossians, relating to baptism, we think it right to refer to some standard authorities on the other side of the question. We do not allude to treatises on Pædobaptism, such as those of Vossius, Williams, and Wardlaw. We point rather to the interesting fact, that Professors Stuart of Andover, and Hodge of Princeton, the most *critical* commentators on Romans in the English language, are decidedly opposed to the views of the Immersionists. The exposition by Olshausen will repay a careful perusal. He appears to occupy intermediate ground, not adopting fully the symbolic exegesis, and yet not discarding the principle on which it is founded. With him, however, baptism is the figure of a figure; and thus far his views are manifestly untenable. For an admirable comment on both passages, and particularly on the verse from Colossians, we refer to Calvin on the New Testament.

5. In the last place, we shall state briefly what we deem to be the amount of Apostolic disclosure, respecting the symbolic character of baptism. It cannot, we think, be doubted that the use of water in the ordinance exhibits emblematically the fact and the necessity of spiritual purification. "The washing of the believer in the blood of Christ," Dr. Carson asserts, "is figuratively represented by the water in baptism." The language is inaccurate, as it makes baptism the representation of a figure; yet it suggests the great emblem about which all are agreed. Having previously explained the common use of this emblem in Scripture, we consider it superfluous to add a syllable, by way of proof or elucidation of the fact. But it is worthy of notice, that

the character of this figure fits it for general comprehension, and for easy transfusion into all languages. The cleansing properties of water are known and acknowledged over the world; and hence the use of water as a symbol of purification is universally intelligible and appropriate.

That a similar commendation could not with truth be bestowed upon immersion, as an emblem of burial, must be conceded by all who have made themselves acquainted with the variety of *modes*, which sepulture has assumed in the history of different nations. Burial is commonly associated in our minds with the act of *lowering* the mortal remains *into* the grave; and to this *accidental* circumstance our opponents are largely indebted for the plausibility attaching to immersion as an emblem of interment. But how does the emblem apply to the burial of Jesus, whose body was *not lowered*, but *raised* to its resting place? What would be its meaning, in the language of a people who considered burial and burning to be synonymous terms? Can dipping symbolize cremation with its attendant last offices? Other modes of burial, according to our conceptions, far more singular, have prevailed in different countries;—some of them still less reconcilable, even by the aid of a rich fancy, with the favourite emblem of the Immersionists.

Suppose, however, that burial in all cases supplied the modal resemblance essential to the alleged symbol, the Baptist would still have to essay the removal of another great difficulty. The Lord is a God of order, not of confusion; and the fruit of this precious truth is

reaped in all the arrangements and institutions of our holy religion. He is confessedly the author of symbolic washing in baptism; and that is one reason why he is not the author of symbolic burial in baptism. The washing of baptism, our minds instantly feel, cannot coalesce with the corruption of burial. The two emblems appear to us incapable of being united in the same act. With the Jew this difficulty would be greatly more formidable, inasmuch as the very touch of a grave induced such ceremonial defilement as demanded a prescribed process of cleansing. But the difficulty is not peculiar to Jews or Gentiles;—it is the difficulty of the human mind in all lands and ages—the difficulty of bringing together, under one symbol, heterogeneous and conflicting elements. We are not trenching on the province of the Bible; for we have already shown that *its authority cannot be fairly pleaded for making baptism the joint symbol of washing and interment*. How much more satisfactory, then, and, as we contend, more scriptural too, in dealing with the external rite, to hold to the symbol of cleansing, and to expound as truths recognised, but not symbolized in baptism, our relations to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, with kindred doctrines and their implied obligations. On this simple principle, which has been sufficiently developed, all appears clear and unobjectionable; while the neglect of it necessarily introduces confusion and incongruity into the symbolic acceptation of baptism.

Passing to another point, we observe that some Baptist writers object to the sprinkling or pouring of

*pure water*, as an emblem of spiritual cleansing. This small objection was advanced, with ludicrous pomposity, in the American *Debate on Baptism*, between Rice and Campbell, in 1843.—“In my rich resources of evidence,” says Campbell, “and in my exuberant liberality, I feel disposed just at this point, to tender to my friend Mr. R., another universal proposition.” After some additional remarks in this ornate strain, he continues ;—“I affirm, then, that all the *sprinklings* and *pourings* of the law from Moses to Christ, required something more than water to effect any legal ceremonial, or typical cleansing. . . . Hence the addition of blood, or its substitute, the ashes of a blood-red heifer, was essential to every purgation in which water was sprinkled.”—*Debate*, p. 150. This *discovery*, which Campbell introduces with sound of sackbut, is thus commented on by Williams, in his work on Antipædobaptism, which appeared in 1789.—“The trite and frivolous objection, ‘that there was no rite under the Mosaic economy which enjoined the sprinkling of *pure water*,’ hardly deserves an answer. For we have no dispute about the *nature* of the element; this the records of the New Testament fix without controversy: our analogical allusion, therefore, is not to the *purifying liquid*, whether *water*, pure or mixed, or *blood*, or *oil*, &c., but to the mode of application.”—Vol. II. p. 80. The *clean water* which God promises to *sprinkle* upon his people, (Ezek. xxxvi. 25,) Mr. Campbell understands of the water of ceremonial purification; and the view is sustained by some authorities. The other side, however, we hold to be better supported; but it is unnecessary to enter into



the discussion. Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, applies the phrase to common water free from physical impurities; and this must be undoubtedly its meaning, if the prediction contemplates any religious observance under the Christian dispensation—unless this American Baptist can extract from the writings of evangelists and apostles some latent sanction for making *holy water*, by the addition of purifying ingredients to the element as we receive it from the limpid fountain. Water unmixed forms a perfect symbol of the blood of Christ; while water was combined with sacrificial blood under a less spiritual economy; and to the former the prophet manifestly alluded.

By preceding inquiries, we are prepared to meet the objection founded on the application of *λούω* and *λουτρών* to the baptismal ordinance. The use of these terms, we maintain, does not imply baptism by immersion. We have produced evidence to the fact, that among the ancient Greeks, as well as among the Egyptians, immersion formed no part of the ordinary process of bathing. *Λούω* and *λουτρών*, it is acknowledged on all hands, are not *modal* words; but the testimony to which we refer carries the matter farther, by bringing *affusion* or *pouring* within the range of their common and accredited applications. In Eph. v. 25, 26, it is said, “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, *τῷ λουτρῶν τοῦ ὕδατος*, *with the washing of water* by the word.” In this fine passage, the leading image contemplates spiritual cleansing, which is symbolized by the washing with water, and we have no authority for confining the symbol to any par-

ticular mode. The language, according to Bloomfield, “alludes to the Oriental methods of making the skin so clear and smooth, by removing all freckles, wrinkles, or other blemishes, as to be *ἄμωμον*.” No mere mode of applying water, it is manifest, comes up to the results conveyed in the apostolic description; while any mode will serve as an appropriate emblem of that spiritual cleansing which is effected by the application of the blood of Christ to the heart and conscience. See also Heb. x. 22.

Rev. i. 5, presents us with another interesting testimony. “Now unto him, *λούσαντι* . . . . *ἐν τῷ ἁματι*, *that washed* us from our sins *in his own blood*,” or by means of his own blood. The standard mode of applying blood for purposes of typical purification, was sprinkling; and hence 1 Peter i. 2, speaks of the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The *washing* and the *sprinkling* we regard as alike referring to the spiritual agencies by which God carries out the provisions of his covenant salvation in the holiness of his people. The last passage we shall cite in this connection is Titus iii. 5, “According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” The term rendered *shed* by our translators is *ἐξέχεεν* *poured out*, which literally corresponds with the Scripture account of the Spirit’s baptism. To these and similar passages the remark is emphatically applicable, that had the Author of divine revelation intended to establish immersion as the exclusive mode of Christian baptism, he would not have

authorized the use of such terms as *washing*, *sprinkling*, *pouring*, in circumstances which carry an obvious allusion to that important ordinance, and that, in particular, he would not have stamped the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

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V. We proceed to evince the subordination of mere mode to the spirit and substance of the ordinance as indicated by the expression, "Baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Mat. xxviii. 19.

1. We have ventured to submit, as a fact of some importance, that there are truths recognised and implied in baptism, of which the administration of the ordinance was not designed to afford a symbolical exhibition. The influence of this fact in bringing down mode from the lofty elevation to which some have raised it, will readily become apparent. On the sacred page we meet considerable diversity of baptisms. The Israelites were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; John baptized into repentance, pointing the faith of his converts to him who was to come; the apostles of Christianity baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, or into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Such forms of expression obviously indicate in the baptismal ordinance an element of immeasurably higher value than the mere mode of administration. In the instances specified, the outward rite may have been the same;—not so its spiritual significance, or the truths

of which it formed the public and solemn recognition. Baptism into Moses clearly implied the acknowledgment of his official claims as a leader and lawgiver, and of the economy called after his name,—just as baptism into Christ implies the acknowledgment of our blessed Lord in his personal, and mediatorial character, and of the faith which he founded,—and as the baptism of the commission implies the acknowledgment of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Now in no case does the mode of baptism, whether immersion or affusion, symbolize this weighty acknowledgment, which is yet of the very essence of the ordinance, and owned as such by all evangelical churches. Mode, we admit, would have occupied a position of deep and permanent interest, had the Scriptures constituted it an emblem of relationship to the blessed Trinity. Were trine immersion, for instance, authoritatively bound up with the recognition of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the neglect of that observance would amount to a practical disregard, or denial of the doctrine. But the word of God proceeds upon a principle widely different. It has no sympathy with patristic solicitude to discover some outward representative of every truth implied in the ordinance of baptism. This is clear from the *baptisms* already noticed. There existed considerable difference between the truths recognised in John's baptism, and in that of Jesus respectively; but the difference did not reveal itself in the external observance,—it found no tongue in mode.

The proselyte to Judaism was baptized, the convert to Christianity was baptized; but, though the mode may have been the same, who would identify Jewish



proselyte-baptism with Christian baptism? Were the mode the ordinance, as some maintain, Jewish baptism, contrary to ascertained fact, would be the same as Christian baptism. Again, if mode presented an emblem of all the facts and doctrines implied in the ordinance, diversity of external observance would be absolutely indispensable. The facts and doctrines in the two cases, being widely different from each other, a corresponding difference would be demanded in the emblematic representation. But both rites may be administered by the same ablution, without let or hindrance in either to the acknowledgment of that peculiar system into which baptism may be said to initiate. We conclude, therefore, with the utmost certainty, that as there are great truths recognised in baptism, which mode was not intended to symbolize, and which are acknowledged in common by the advocates of different modes, the ordinance possesses, in view of these truths, an essential character and significance independent altogether of varying forms of administration.

2. The meaning of baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, demands still closer inquiry. This formula, we have seen, includes something more than the most ingenious interpreter of symbols can discover in the outward rite. Immersion says, *it is not in me*; "it is not in me," re-echoes sprinkling. Baptism into Christ's death, according to Dr. Carson, comprehends *baptism into the faith of his death*; and, without professing to have exhausted the import of the expression, we may safely maintain that the apostolic commission enjoins *baptism*

*into the faith of* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In these connections, our Baptist friends are not solicitous to obtrude upon the Christian public their favourite *dip* or *immerse*. Dipping into Moses, dipping into the name of the Father, dipping into Jesus Christ, are phrases which in general they seem purposely to eschew. The substitution of baptism for dipping is on their part a practical turning away from the boasted fruits of their philology, and taking shelter under a term the vagueness or ambiguity of which they elsewhere loudly denounce. We regard it, however, as a tribute reluctantly paid to the subordination of mode; for if *immersion* could at all serve the purpose, we feel assured, they would not have recourse to *baptism*.

When the Evangelist speaks of “baptism into the name of the Father,” &c., the transaction, viewed in its isolated state, appears to be of a purely spiritual character. The use of water is not mentioned, though Baptist joins with Pædobaptist in maintaining against the Quaker, that it is implied. But it is not upon the ground of this ellipsis that we assign to the application of water a very subordinate place in the institution of Christian baptism. Had water been distinctly specified in the commission, so long as that authoritative document required the ministers of Christianity to “baptize into the name of the Father,” we should still have contended that the ordinance possesses an essential character to which the use of water is merely subservient. This thought largely occupies our minds when we peruse the language of Scripture on the subject; and that Baptist treatises bear testimony to its force we shall endeavour

to evince. The apostles, says Mr. Stovel, were “commanded to initiate the disciples, for βαπτίζεν εἰς, in such a connection, means to initiate, . . . into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”—p. 193. It is true, the writer gives us a very different view in the *Appendix*, but that is his own affair. So then baptism is neither dipping, nor affusion, nor sprinkling;—it is initiation. The latest leader of the Immersionists assures us in express terms that “βαπτίζεν εἰς means *to initiate*.”

Has Mr. Stovel reflected on the consequences of this specimen of Baptist exposition? If I am *initiated* (βαπτίζομενος εἰς) “into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” by whatever process, or in whatever mode, it follows as the veriest truism that I am a *baptized* Christian. There is no escape from this conclusion. If the baptism of the commission denotes initiation, a man may be baptized without either sprinkling or immersion; and, in fact, without any application of water whatever. Such is the liberality of the doctrine taught in Mr. Stovel’s *Lectures*. Were the initiation of a convert complete and Scriptural in other respects, the additional act of sprinkling or affusion, of course, could not invalidate it; and thus, so far as mode is concerned, our baptism is substantively endorsed by the most recent, if not the ablest, champion of immersion.

3. The subordination of mode will be farther evident by comparing the structure of the commission with that of parallel passages. It has been often observed that the New Testament gives marked prominence to the

design of the ordinance, while its mode appears to be studiously cast into the shade. When Paul (Acts xix. 3,) asked certain disciples, "Into what then were ye baptized?"—the answer was not "into Jordan," or "into the Sea of Tiberias;" but "into John's baptism." The design, or character of baptism, was the point of engrossing interest; while the name of the baptizing element and the mode of its application have no place in the narrative. Had these disciples understood Paul to inquire *into what they were plunged or dipped*, and had their views been those of modern Immersionists, the apostle would have received a very different answer.

Baptist writers with critics of some name, we are aware, labour to dispose of this peculiarity of construction as a common and natural ellipsis. But this does not meet the difficulty. We read in Acts xvi. 15, that "Lydia was baptized, and her household;" and as no regimen is expressed after the verb, all parties agree that it must be understood. Lydia was baptized *in water*, or *with water*. But the structure of the commission is widely different, inasmuch as the participle *baptizing* is followed by the preposition *eis* with its appropriate case, thus presenting a form of expression which is complete alike in sentiment and syntax. True indeed, the preposition and its case do not refer to water; but this circumstance forms the very peculiarity of which the common ellipsis cannot give a satisfactory account. The commission enjoins baptism *not into water*, but *into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. How shall we deal with this construction? The ordinary ellipsis is uncalled for, or inadmissible. If we inserted



εἰς ὑδωρ after the participle, we should have—"Baptizing them *into water*, into the name," &c.—a collocation of words which, we venture to say, is without parallel either in sacred or profane literature. We have here the means of upsetting the allegation of Dr. Carson and other Baptist writers respecting the construction of εἰς after βαπτίζω in the New Testament. When we affirm that, in reference to the external rite, this regimen seems to be scrupulously avoided by the sacred writers, we are met with a direct contradiction, accompanied by an appeal to the form occurring in the apostolic commission and elsewhere. But the passages cited do not sustain the appeal. For if the verb denotes dip, and nothing but dip, the commission requires us to dip a disciple "*into the name of the Father*," &c. The entire force of the verb is thus expended on an act which every one must admit to be spiritual, and the construction, as it stands, does not touch the use of water in baptism. That the commission is wide enough to admit both *water*, and *infants*, though it specifies neither, we are thoroughly convinced; and we feel no less assurance that the Baptist cannot draw from the structure of the language one particle of warrant for his mode of employing the water. In accordance with the commission, he may on his own principles dip into the name of the Father, but he cannot dip *into water*, without inserting a clause to that effect in defiance of all precedent. Can there be stronger proof that the use of water was meant to be subordinate, and that baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, forms the substance of the ordinance?

May it not be objected that our interpretation would pave the way for setting aside the use of water altogether, in baptism? We answer, no: for while the spiritual initiation constitutes, in our view, the essence of the ordinance, the recorded examples of baptism in Scripture exhibit the use of water as a sanctioned and veritable fact. These examples, being an inspired comment on the commission, settle the question respecting the necessity of water in the administration of the ordinance. We have then both the substance and the symbol, between which we discern the most instructive mutual harmony. Our relationship to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must be attended with spiritual cleansing, which finds its appropriate emblem in the application of water to the body. The fact of this application enters essentially into the Scripture symbol, and is therefore indispensable in baptism; with regard to the mode, as we intimated at the outset, it does not appear that we are *divinely* restricted, any more than in the *time* of observing the Lord's *Supper*.

The real ellipsis of the commission, which may be learned by consulting 1 Cor. x. 2, corroborates our view. It is stated by the Apostle that the fathers of the Jewish church "were all baptized (*εἰς*) into Moses, (*ἐν*) in the cloud, and in the sea." By comparing the narrative in Exodus with the reference by Paul, we ascertain that cloud and sea were employed in administering this primeval baptism,—and also that the Israelites were *not dipped* into the cloud, and into the Sea. Expounded on the natural and obvious principle which this passage supplies, the Commission must associate the use of water

with its baptism into the divine name; but without either command or inference in favour of immersion. If, in administering baptism into Moses, sea and cloud could be used without immersion; may not water be used without immersion in administering baptism into Christ? The case, we submit, warrants a strong conclusion against the necessity of immersion; and it will remind the reflective reader of the Holy Spirit's baptism, which is administered by the *outpouring* of the emblem *upon* its Scriptural subjects.

NOTE: See "*A Dissertation on the Nature and Administration of Baptism*, Part I., by the Rev. Wm. Sommerville, A.M., Horton;"—containing a lucid and logical discussion of some parts of the evidence canvassed in this chapter. Mr. Sommerville is a talented and respectable missionary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE FATHERS.

CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE PATRISTIC ARGUMENT, AS DISTINGUISHED BOTH FROM THE MERE *OPINION* AND *PRACTICE* OF THE FATHERS.—MODE OF BAPTISM COUNTENANCED BY EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS NOT NECESSARILY THAT OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.—TENDENCY OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES TO ASSUME STEREOTYPED FORMS.—PATRISTIC EVIDENCE MOST FORCIBLE, WHEN IT RELATES TO BAPTISMS UNCONNECTED WITH THE CHRISTIAN ORDINANCE.—CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL POINTS TO WHICH THE FATHERS BEAR WITNESS.—I. THE BAPTISM OF *CLINICS* ADMINISTERED BY POURING OR PERFUSION.—STRENGTH OF THIS BRANCH OF THE GENERAL ARGUMENT.—II. COMMENTS BY THE FATHERS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE, PROVE THAT THEY DID NOT IDENTIFY BAPTISM WITH IMMERSION.—III. THE FATHERS APPLIED THE TERM BAPTISM TO ABLUTIONS IN WHICH THERE WAS NO IMMERSION.—CONCLUSION OF THE *FIRST PART*.

LET us endeavour to comprehend the character of the patristic argument, with the amount of consideration which it may reasonably claim. The question is not, what was the practice of the Christian Church during the early centuries? The question is not, what mode of baptism met the approval of the leading ecclesiastical writers of the period? We might receive full and correct answers to these questions, without being put in possession of a particle of evidence to the meaning



of the term baptism. In explanation of this branch of ancient testimony, we observe—

1. That the mode of baptism practised by the fathers has no necessary correspondence with the requirement of the apostolic commission. A change of practice, in the intervening period, is not only possible, but to a certain extent, demonstrated. Are our opponents prepared to pledge themselves indiscriminately to patristic modes of administering baptism?

2. That the liturgical department of religion has a constant tendency to assume stereotyped forms which are not always consistent with the Christian liberty secured by the word of God. Suppose our Saviour to have left the mode of baptism free and unfettered, still the Church must have sanctioned some form; and this form would inevitably influence the thoughts and language of the fathers in expounding the ordinance. To this principle we are mainly indebted for the frequentative sense of βαπτίζω, the judgment of its early patrons being controlled not by philological, but by ecclesiastical considerations.

3. That patristic testimony to the meaning of baptism is most valuable, when it does not relate to the Christian ordinance. This is no paradox. When a father speaks of baptism in the light of the apostolic commission, he is under a strong temptation to accommodate his exegesis to the practice of his age, or church. The baptism which he habitually administers he will be solicitous to identify with the baptism of the commission. Whereas, if he is employing the term in a general way, apart from its appropriated ecclesiastical use, he will be more

likely to exemplify its true and accredited acceptation. On this ground we reject Dr. Carson's limitation, as formerly noticed, and take a more comprehensive survey of the testimony of the Christian fathers. Our summary is as follows.—

I. In cases of bodily infirmity, the early church recognised baptism by pouring or affusion as perfectly valid. Whether the recognition was right or wrong, is not our present inquiry:—we have simply to deal with the fact, as furnishing a certain amount of evidence to the patristic acceptation of baptism. An example will best elicit the force of this class of testimonies. From the *Letters* of Cornelius of Rome preserved by Eusebius in his *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 43, we learn that Novatus, on the bed from which he expected to rise no more, received *baptism by pouring, or circumfusion*. Now whatever preference the ancient church may have betrayed for immersion, and however she may have attached to other modes a mark of inferiority, yet by admitting the validity of affusion-baptism, she occupies a position of direct antagonism to the principles of our modern Immersionists. Had the practice of immersion been even more general among the early Christians than history proves it to have been, still the acknowledgment and sanction of other modes are undoubted, and thence it follows demonstrably that baptism and immersion were not considered identical.

The argument may be drawn out somewhat more *in extenso*. The Latin designation of a person long confined from ill health was *lectualis*, the Greek, κλινικός; and the latter is commonly applied to one baptized by

aspersion on his sick bed. Such cases were of rather frequent occurrence both in the Eastern and Western church. *Clinics*, as they are styled, were divided into two classes. The *first* embraced Catechumens, or Gentile converts, who, when visited with disease, evinced an earnest solicitude to be received into the membership of the church by baptism, before their death. Parties so circumstanced were generally admitted to the ordinance, and as generally was it administered by aspersion or circumfusion. That the validity of this mode gave rise to doubts and discussions, we frankly avow; but at the same time we deliberately affirm that the Fathers of both churches did not hesitate to call the ordinance thus administered by the name of baptism. Among others, Epiphanius of the Greek church, and Cyprian of the Latin distinctly recognise the baptism of *clinics* by affusion, which they manifestly could not have done, had baptism with them been immersion, and nothing but immersion.

The *second* class of clinics comprehended those who purposely deferred their baptism till the very close of life, because they apprehended that for sin committed after baptism the gospel provides no remission. On this sad abuse we merely remark in passing, that if Adult baptism is here "without sin," it may "cast a stone at" Infant baptism. This criminal delay appears to have been founded chiefly on a false interpretation of Heb. vi. 4;—the term *enlightened* being then commonly regarded as interchangeable with *baptized*. Against a practice, in which ignorance and superstition seem to have been blended in equal proportions, many of the

Fathers reasoned powerfully, and remonstrated warmly and eloquently; yet though it was administered by aspersion or sprinkling, their views of language and of Christianity did not prompt them to withhold from the ordinance the name of baptism.

To the objection that these are sparse exceptions to a general rule, we take leave to reply that the strength of the argument is by no means proportioned to the number of instances in which pouring or circumfusion formed the mode of patristic baptism. In the appeal to the Fathers, the question between us and our opponents is,—Do these venerable witnesses testify or not that there can be *baptism* where there is no *immersion*? If we can produce from their writings *one* unexceptionable instance of a rite acknowledged to be baptism, though administered without immersion, judgment on the appeal must necessarily go in our favour. Let the Fathers, in a solitary case, call him on whom the symbolic water has been poured, a baptized man, and they stand committed irrevocably and for ever against the modern doctrine that “baptism is immersion, and nothing but immersion is baptism.”

We are not, however, as has been already intimated, confined to one case. Hilarius on 1 Tim. iii. 12, 13, cited by Beecher, says,—Non desunt qui prope quotidie baptizantur aegri: “There are not wanting sick persons who are baptized almost daily.” The number, then, must have been very considerable; and what is of higher importance, we have the express authority of the Greek Fathers, who “knew the meaning of their own language,” for applying the term baptism to the



ordinance, when pouring or aspersion constituted the mode of its administration. Thus on the great principle of the question, the exclusive spirit of our opponents, far from being countenanced, is pointedly condemned by the larger and more liberal views of patristic theology.

Attempts having been made by some authors, little to their own credit, to degrade clinical baptism, a brief examination of its character appears requisite to the integrity and conclusiveness of our argument. "Cyprian," says Dr. Carson, "even in the letter in which he defends the validity of perfusion as a substitute for baptism in cases of necessity, calls it an abridgment or compend of the ordinance." Instead of conveying the whole truth, this statement unhappily has all the effect of misrepresentation. When Cyprian employs the term *compendia*, it is manifestly in tacit contrast with the more operose and complicated administration of baptism which prevailed in that age, and which is known to have included *something more* than immersion. Besides he styles *aspersion* or *perfusion*, *divina compendia*, a "*divine* abridgment or compend," which he not only maintains to be perfectly sufficient; but in defence of which he adduces Scripture testimony, particularly Ezek. xxvi. 25, "Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." See *Cypr. Opera*. Tom. i. p. 201. Antw. Edit. of 1542. Nor does he consider perfusion, as is asserted, to be "a substitute for baptism,"—on the contrary he distinctly calls it baptism, and even ecclesiastical baptism, or the baptism of the church, and earnestly contends that those to whom it

has been administered, should receive the appellation not of *Clinics* but of *Christians*.

“Cyprian,” rejoins Dr. Carson, “calls perfusion the *ecclesiastical baptism*, as distinguished from baptism in the proper sense of the term. The persons perfused in their beds on account of sickness were not supposed to be properly baptized; but they received the ecclesiastical baptism—that is, what the church, in such cases, admitted as a valid substitute for baptism.” A statement more completely at variance with ancient record we have seldom detected in the works of any author of character, and we are not, therefore, surprised at the strong language of Dr. Halley, when he says, “Either the writer of these assertions is not a reader of Cyprian, or he is not an honest man.” “The ecclesiastical baptism” of this Father is too well known to form a subject of theological debate. In the best sense of the expression, it is the baptism of the church, administered by her officers, stamped with her sanction, introducing to her communion, and distinguished from the baptism of heretics. Cyprian, in fact, is acquainted with no baptism higher, holier, or more scriptural than the ecclesiastical baptism. In his *Epistle* to Jubaianus, (l. c. Tom. ii. p. 99) he speaks of Philip as administering this baptism to the Samaritans, and at p. 107, he says, “Nec recusabunt baptizari apud nos hæretici legitimo et vero *ecclesiæ baptismo*, cum ex nobis didicerint baptizatos quoque a Paulo eos, qui jam baptismo Joannis baptizati fuissent.” Acts xix. 1—5. It is hopeless, indeed, for the boldest controversialist to attempt the conversion of Cyprian’s ecclesiastical baptism into a

substitute for the ordinance properly so called; and the undertaking, as it is not likely to find talent and acumen superior to those of Dr. Carson, may be confidently expected to issue in humiliating exposure. The truth is, that by designating aspersion or perfusion the ecclesiastical baptism, Cyprian has not only affixed to it the seal of the church's authoritative sanction; but, in regard to the application of the term, has furnished irresistible evidence that the early Christians had no hesitation in speaking of baptism, when there was no immersion. On this point the utmost stretch of ingenuity can never reconcile patristic testimony with the principles and practice of modern Baptists. According to their polity, would perfusion in the case of invalids, be regarded as ecclesiastical baptism? If truth compels them to answer in the negative, where, we ask, is the ground of their real or pretended confidence in appealing to the tenets and testimony of Christian antiquity?

Were it at all necessary to our object, there would be no difficulty in showing from a candid and careful examination of the writings of Cyprian that his views on the general subject, and especially on the symbolic nature of the washing in baptism, are more correct, and less trifling, than they have been sometimes represented. But we must pass on to other considerations.

II. Scripture testimonies applied to the ordinance by the Fathers prove that in their minds, baptism and immersion were not identified. We have seen that in certain circumstances, perfusion was regarded as valid baptism, contrary to the dogma that immersion alone is

baptism. We are now invited to view patristic evidence under another, and a no less interesting aspect. In their voluminous writings, the Fathers introduce many elucidations of baptism, especially from the Hebrew Scriptures: and an examination of the passages will generally reveal the specific object for which they are cited, and the *idea* of the baptismal institute, which dictated their application. Are we accustomed, for instance, to consider baptism as nothing but immersion?—do we belong to a community who spurn the existence of any tie, even the slenderest, between that ordinance and sprinkling?—is this state of feeling so permanent and pervading as to have become almost constitutional? The consequence may be easily anticipated. In that mood of mind it will be impossible for us to apply to baptism those texts of Scripture which give an emphatic prominence to the act of sprinkling or affusion. This seems to supply a fair test of the sentiments of writers, both ancient and modern, respecting the mode of baptism. Where is the Immersionist of our day who will unhesitatingly apply to baptism the precious promise,—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you?” Yet the Fathers freely and frequently make the application, marking again and again an intimate connection between the *sprinkling* announced by the prophet, and the *baptism* administered under the New Testament economy.

We have found Cyprian quoting this lovely prophecy in support of perfusion as valid ecclesiastical baptism. The same view is taken by the Greek Fathers, Theodoret, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa and others.



We shall content ourselves with one testimony, *ex abundantia*, accompanied by the explanatory remarks of President Beecher:—"Cyril of Alexandria, on Isa. iv. 4, vol. ii. Paris, 1838, speaks of the *sprinkling* of the ashes of a heifer as a *baptism*. He is denying the power of mere external rites to purify the soul, and says, βεβαπτίσμεθα μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἐν ὕδατι γύμνω, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ σπόδαρ δαμάλεως,—ἀλλ' ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ. 'We have been baptized not with mere water, nor yet with the ashes of a heifer, but with the Holy Spirit and fire.' This implies that externally there was a baptism by water; and therefore, just as clearly, that there was an external baptism by the ashes of a heifer. What was this? Let Paul answer: 'The ashes of a heifer *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.' If any one should say there was a rite of washing or bathing connected with sprinkling; I answer—not in the case of the *sprinkled person*, as I have shown (§ 28, 11); and if there were, still he was not immersed in or by the ashes of a heifer, and to this the word βαπτίζω is here limited. Besides, Cyril, in a parenthetical explanation after δαμάλεως, evolves his own meaning too clearly to admit of denial—ἐρραντίσμεθα δὲ πρὸς μόνην τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα, καθὰ φησὶν ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος. 'We are sprinkled to purify the flesh alone, as says the blessed Paul.' According to Cyril, then, the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer was an external baptism, but it did not effect real and spiritual purification, any more than a mere washing in water. The *sprinkling* of an unclean person with the ashes of a heifer was, therefore, another of the διαφόροι βαπτισμοὶ of which Paul speaks."—*Bib. Repos.* vol. ix. p. 97.

Passages of this nature which we find profusely scattered over the pages of the Fathers, teach a plain lesson respecting the strong association which indubitably existed between baptism and diversity of mode in the application of water. To think of sprinkling as a baptism, whether in the department of history or prediction, evinces a state of mind in which the idea of baptism is far indeed from being absorbed in that of immersion. It is in this state of patristic mind, as it unequivocally develops itself, that the great force of the argument may be discovered. Had the Fathers identified baptism with immersion, they would not have applied to it texts of Scripture in which sprinkling or perfusion is the mode of employing the baptismal element. The practice of immersion in the early ages instead of disparaging, enhances our view. Feeling and prejudice would, of course, fall in with the prevailing mode; yet in defiance of these, the Fathers repeatedly adduce instances of sprinkling under the designation of baptism. Had the native meaning of the term, been at that period brought into the modal bondage advocated by the Immersionists, it would have been utterly impossible for such illustrations to have presented themselves to the mind of Christian antiquity.

III. The term baptism is applied by the Fathers to certain ablutions Jewish and Gentile, which were performed without immersion. Having noticed the latitude of patristic usage, both as regards the administration of Christian baptism, and the passages of Scripture cited to illustrate its character, we consider it interesting, though not essential to our argument, to

glance at the references of ecclesiastical writers to a different class of ablutions. This point is of some moment, inasmuch as we may anticipate from the Fathers an unbiassed testimony, when their language does not bear upon a standard ordinance of the church. Not that the remark implies an impeachment of their honesty, in other portions of their evidence. But it is an undisputed fact that the mode of any customary observance, civil or sacred, becomes so mixed up in our minds with the observance itself, that we find it difficult, if not impracticable, to effect their separation. Under the influence of this associating principle, the Fathers wrote; and still their views are greatly too liberal for the exclusive dipper. This pre-occupation of mind, however, will be considerably mitigated, when baptism is employed to denote generally the ablutions practised by Jews and Gentiles. In such cases, the term may be expected to have its free and full scope, restrained only by those principles which regulate its application in the Greek language at large.

On the subject of Jewish ablutions we confine ourselves to one striking testimony from Ambrose. “*Per hyssopi fasciculum,*” says that Father, “*adspergebatur agni sanguine, qui mundari volebat typico baptis- mate.*” *He who wished to be cleansed by a typical baptism was sprinkled with the blood of a lamb, by means of a bunch of hyssop.* Such passages (for there are many of them) prove that leading minds in the church of the Fathers could easily regard sprinkling as typical of baptism, not certainly of immersion. Nay, Ambrose explicitly recognises sprinkling as baptism—typical baptism—

which he obviously could not have done except upon the fixed principle that there may be baptism where there is no immersion.

The ablutions of the heathen, which were generally performed by affusion, are often referred to by the Fathers as imitations of Christian baptism. Thus Clemens of Alexandria detects an image of the ordinance in the rites of purification observed by Penelope and Telemachus, preparatory to the worship of the gods. For the account of these rites, the learned Father is indebted to Homer, who says of Penelope *Odys. iv. 759*, Ἡ δὲ ὑδραίναμένη κ.τ.λ. “And she having washed,” &c. The verb ὑδραίνω is confessedly not limited to mode, and the Greek language abundantly sanctions its application to pouring or affusion, as may be ascertained by consulting Damm’s *Lexicon Homericum*, or the more scientific work of Liddell and Scott. The ablution of Telemachus is thus described, *Odys. ii. 261*, Χεῖρας νιψάμενος πολιῖς ἀλὸς ἔυχεται Ἀθήνη.—“Having washed his hands in the hoary sea, he prayed to Minerva.” On the action expressed by the verb νίπτω, which is generally limited to the hands and feet, it is almost superfluous to offer a remark. The idea which it conveys is simply that of cleansing the hands, for instance, by the use of water poured, sprinkled, or employed in any other mode which necessity or convenience may dictate. Yet these washings, diverse as they are from immersion, Clemens does not hesitate to style ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ βαπτίσματος, “The image of baptism,” which he regards as “handed down from Moses to the Poets.” Were they the image of immersion? All must answer in the negative.



Had these ablutions been of an uncertain character, we can readily imagine the tone and spirit of some of our opponents in turning them to account. "Here are washings," it would have been said, "in which a Greek father saw the image of baptism; and as baptism is nothing but immersion, the mode of these washings cannot be questioned. If the ablutions of Penelope and Telemachus had not been performed by immersion, they could have presented no image of baptism to the mind of Clemens."—The argument thus outlined is as potent as much of the dogmatism with which we are favoured on the baptismal controversy, and, at the same time, as inadequate to produce rational conviction. In the simple cleansing of the person, or even of the hands, in order to prepare for heathen worship, this Father could trace an instructive image, not indeed of dipping, but of that baptism which employs the application of water to the body to symbolize the spiritual cleansing effected by the word and Spirit of Christ. Our cause, it may be added, does not assume the correctness of the judgment of Clemens. His view may be erroneous, without touching our argument, the force of which consists in the fact that ordinary ablutions in whatever mode conveyed to the mind of a Greek-speaking man an image of Christian baptism.

Connected with this testimony there is another point which merits consideration. Passing from Gentile ablutions, Clemens observes:—"This was a custom among the Jews, that they should be frequently *baptized upon their couch*, as Beecher renders the words, ἐπὶ κοίτῃ βαπτίζεσθαι. "Where," asks Dr. Carson, "did the

President learn that *κοίτη* is a dinner couch? It is a bed for sleeping on. . . . They were immersed ‘on account of the bed;’ that is, pollution contracted there.” The criticism on the rendering of *κοίτη* is founded, as may be evinced from the use of the term by Clemens himself. We find, indeed, several words such as *εὐνη*, *κλίνη*, and *κοίτη*, in the employment of which this Father allows himself considerable latitude,—still we hold there is evidence that the last denotes properly a bed. But we deem the construction which Dr. Carson puts upon the passage to be more doubtful. *Ἐπὶ κοίτῃ* he translates “on account of the bed,” thus adopting a sense which is unusual and for which he produces no authority. The corrected Latin of Hervetus in the *Syllburg Edition* of Clemens is opposed to him, as it renders the phrase “in lecto;” and indeed a baptism *ἐπὶ κοίτῃ* suggests so distinctly the relation of place, that to prefer a different meaning appears very like going out of one’s way to serve a purpose. It may probably appear strange that the Jews should be baptized upon their beds, though not perhaps more so than that they should practise a similar ablution on dinner couches. But the truth is that there existed no difficulty in administering baptism by circumfusion (*περίχυσις*) on an Eastern bed, and as little in observing the purification to which this patristic testimony refers.

In the writings of several Fathers, especially Justin Martyr and Tertullian, we find frequent allusion to the ceremonial sprinklings or aspersions of the heathen, regarded as baptisms. The fact cannot be disputed; but as sufficient foundation has been laid for this part

of our argument, we consider it superfluous to multiply quotations. There is one passage, however, in the works of Origen, relating to an Old Testament transaction, which deserves to be brought fully to light, as it furnishes a remarkable testimony against the identity of baptism and immersion. In the gospel by John i. 25, the Jews are represented as asking the forerunner of our Lord, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"—and the interrogation is thus referred to by Origen in his Commentary.—"What makes you think that Elias when he comes will baptize, who, in Ahab's time, *did not baptize the wood upon the altar*—ὁὐδὲ τὰ ἐπὶ τὰ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου ξύλα . . . βαπτίσαντος—which required washing in order to be burnt up, when the Lord should reveal himself by fire? For he ordered the priests to do that; not only once; for he says, 'Do it the second time,' " &c. *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, vol. iv. p. 260.

We have pronounced this testimony to be a remarkable one, and such it must appear to all who deliberately weigh the entire circumstances of the case. Let it be observed, we here come into contact with the most learned Greek Father, and one of the most accomplished biblical scholars, of the ancient church. To tax such a witness with ignorance of the circumstances embraced in his evidence, or of the language in whose varied literature he stood so pre-eminent, would be extreme and unaccountable fatuity. Origen knew, as well as any modern Baptist knows, that Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 23,) commanded his attendants to fill the barrels with water, and *pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.*

The author of the Hexapla had carefully studied his Bible, and entered profoundly and minutely into its different peculiarities of thought, and forms of expression. How invaluable then is the testimony, when a writer of such undoubted attainments, identifies the command to *pour water* upon *the wood*, with a command to *baptize*. Elijah did not himself baptize; for he ordered the priests to do that. To do what? To *pour water* on the wood upon the altar; and this, in the estimation of the most distinguished Greek Father, was baptism! Comment may succeed in diluting, but is incompetent to strengthen the force of a testimony so decided, and unexceptionable. That in regard to the meaning of baptism, it utterly breaks away from the trammels of an exclusively modal application, is clear as the noon-day sun.

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CLOSE OF THE DISCUSSION ON MODE.—We have now travelled over the ground occupied by the first great division of the baptismal controversy. The mode of baptism has been contemplated in the light of three leading sources of historical and philological evidence. We commenced with the classical department, because in the language of ancient Greece the term originated, and its sense became comparatively fixed. The root of βαπτίζω we discovered in βάπτω, with its two senses of *dipping*, and *dyeing*, both of which we found to be incontestably exemplified. Proceeding with the evidence furnished by the classics, we ascertained that *dipping*



is by no means essential to the process indicated by βαπτίζω and its derivatives. The sea-coast, as we learned from Aristotle, may be baptized by the tide flowing over it. This is not dipping, but it is baptism. Other instances were adduced in support of our view, and we canvassed a variety of constructions, tending, in our judgment, to its farther elucidation and confirmation.

Passing from classical testimonies, we reviewed the evidence supplied by Josephus, the Septuagint, and the Apocrypha, preparatory to an entrance on the examination of the New Testament. With a similar object, we investigated the force of λούω and its related nouns, correcting some errors and misapprehensions of Dr. Carson, and bringing out the pregnant fact, that in Greece and Egypt, the ordinary mode of bathing in ancient times was by pouring, and not by immersion. The bearing of this fact on some of the most instructive Scripture allusions to baptism, is found to be equally direct and important.

New Testament evidence we submitted to a fuller discussion, comprehending an inquiry into Jewish Proselyte baptism, and a review of the principal Pharisaic ablutions,—in the relations which they severally sustain to the Christian ordinance. We offer nothing, at present, in the shape of recapitulation; but simply refer the reader to the evidence itself, especially to what was advanced in sifting the testimonies relating to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and in reply to the leading objections of the Immersionists.

For these connected branches of evidence, including the patristic argument we merely solicit a conscientious

and calm consideration. It is to us incomprehensible that a mind at all conversant with the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers, could hesitate to admit that, in their use of language, *circumfusions, pourings, sprinklings, &c.*, are all veritable baptisms. We do not presume to have exhausted the subject, or even enumerated all the testimonies; yet evidence enough has been produced to satisfy the enlightened and candid inquirer that no impartial exegesis can identify patristic baptisms in their length and breadth, with the modern doctrine of immersion.

In our investigations on mode thus brought to a conclusion, we submit that sufficient grounds have been laid for refusing to be fettered by the modal exclusiveness of our Baptist friends, and for maintaining in our practice, and transmitting to other generations the heritage of liberty which we hold to be jointly guaranteed by the usage of the classics, the Scriptures, and the Fathers of the Christian Church.

## PART SECOND.

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### SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

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#### CHAPTER FIRST.

##### GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

CHARACTER OF THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION.—BAPTIST AND PÆDOBAPTIST TO SOME EXTENT OCCUPY COMMON GROUND.—BOTH ADMINISTER BAPTISM TO A BELIEVING ADULT.—POINT OF DIVERGENCE.—THE INFANTS OF CHURCH MEMBERS ALSO ADMITTED TO THE ORDINANCE BY THE PÆDO-BAPTIST.—HIS OPPONENT PROFESSES TO BAPTIZE NONE BUT BELIEVERS.—SCRIPTURE THE SUPREME AND SOLE ARBITER.

WE now enter upon the second leading department of our inquiry, which has for its object to furnish a scriptural answer to the question, "To whom is baptism to be administered?" The investigations indispensable to a satisfactory solution are perhaps less learned and recondite than those in which we have been hitherto engaged, though the issue involves consequences which are obviously more momentous to the constitution and character of the Christian church. On this field "Greek meets Greek," in less frequent encounter; yet no one

will pretend to weigh the mere *mode* of receiving into church membership against the fœderal standing, or religious qualifications of the candidate.

In discussing this great question, it is pleasing to reflect that in defiance of the encroaching spirit of controversy, some common ground still remains to the Baptist and Pædobaptist. On one prominent part of the field, the strife of angry polemics is exchanged for the accents of peace and Christian harmony. We refer, of course, to the universal recognition of a believing adult, as a scriptural subject of baptism. Difference of opinion may exist respecting the requisite amount of qualification in knowledge, dispositions, and character; and all may not adopt the same standard in judging of the credibility of a religious profession;—but the church officers who keep the door of admission once satisfied on this score, we are aware of no denomination of Christians that would, for a moment, hesitate to administer the initiatory rite. With all promptitude and sincerity does the Pædobaptist address the peoples and nations of the world in the language of Peter,—“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” Let it be remembered, then, that a believing adult, or one making a credible profession of faith in the Saviour, is regarded by ourselves, no less than by our opponents, as a proper and scriptural subject of Christian baptism.

Having proceeded thus far along the same path, the parties unhappily reach the point of divergence. The Baptist takes his stand upon the principle that the word of God distinctly and absolutely limits the ordi-



nance to the believer in Christ. *We* admit the believer to be *a* Scriptural subject of baptism: the opposing view regards him as *the only* Scriptural subject of baptism. As we found our opponents maintaining immersion to be the exclusive mode, so they contend that the believer is the exclusive subject, of this solemn ordinance. The Pædobaptist, on the other hand, recognises another interesting class as equally entitled to the symbol of the washing of regeneration. The doctrine of our church on the entire question is thus clearly and nervously expressed in the Westminster Confession, chap. xxviii. 4, “Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.”—Such we conceive to be the two leading points of agreement and difference respecting the rightful subjects of baptism; and the way is so far opened up for canvassing the evidence of that inspired record, which forms the supreme and authoritative arbiter in this and every other case of conflicting doctrines and observances.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### PROFESSION A PREREQUISITE TO ADULT BAPTISM.

IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADULT BAPTISM.—CONNECTION OF THIS TOPIC WITH INFANT BAPTISM.—PRESUMPTIVE ARGUMENT DRAWN FROM JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM, AND FROM JOHN'S "BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE."—THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION FAVOURABLE TO THE NECESSITY OF A PROFESSION OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE BY THE ADULT CANDIDATE FOR THE ORDINANCE.—OUR VIEW OF MAT. XXVIII. 19, BORNE OUT AND STRENGTHENED BY THE INSTRUCTION RECORDED IN MARK XVI. 16.—VALUE OF SUCH FORMS OF EXPRESSION AS PLACE BAPTISM POSTERIOR TO FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

THE indiscriminate admission of adults to baptism necessarily rules the indiscriminate admission of infants. If infants are to be admitted at all, no ground of distinction among them can survive the polity of baptizing adults irrespective of all religious qualification. On the supposition that faith, or a credible profession of faith, forms no prerequisite to baptism in the adult, who does not see the absurdity and wrong of restricting infant baptism to the children of believing parents? This liberal, or latitudinarian view is, we understand, very generally embraced by our brethren of the English Independent Churches. "There are those," observes Dr. Halley, "who baptize all applicants whatsoever;

provided the application does not appear to be made scoffingly and profanely, for that would be a manifest desecration of the service, and all children offered by their parents, guardians, or others who may have the care of them. These interpret the commission in its widest sense, and most literally explain ‘all the nations.’” Against this interpretation, to which Dr. Halley has lent the aid of his powerful advocacy, is arrayed, as we believe, the general tenor of Scripture testimony, with the particular evidence of the apostolic commission, and of apostolic and evangelical practice thereon founded. The proof of our point we shall endeavour to furnish as briefly as may be consistent with justice to the subject.

The relation of baptism to diverse systems exhibits some species of religious profession as a uniform prerequisite in the adult to whom the ordinance is administered. Baptism properly so called has invariably sustained the character of an initiatory observance. Its leading design, as a symbol of purification, is to signalize in an impressive manner, the transition from the world to the church, or more generally the admission of man into the visible family of God. This applies to various economies.

1. A profession was required of the adult candidate for Jewish proselyte baptism. The Jews admitted people of other tribes into the fellowship of their peculiar privileges. On what principle did their narrow economy open “a wide and effectual door” for the entrance of Gentile worshippers? Were the waters of proselyte baptism accessible to a heathen, on the mere respectful intimation of his wish to that effect? On the

contrary it was expressly demanded of the candidate to renounce his paganism of whatever name or complexion, and make a credible profession of his faith in the God of Israel, according to the character and forms of the Mosaic dispensation. Without this, or its equivalent, it is plain to common sense, he could have been no proselyte, no convert even in the loosest acceptation of the term; but the entire service would have presented a culpable mockery and delusion.

2. In the subjects of John's baptism we have an analogous prerequisite, suited to the design and circumstances of his preparatory mission. The great object of our Lord's forerunner was to inculcate religious doctrine, and promote practical piety. His appearance had been heralded by the cheering prediction that he should "turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God." The enterprise in which he devotedly embarked contemplated nothing short of a public moral reformation. To reach the heart and rectify the life of a nation constituted his godlike aim—an aim of which he never for an instant lost sight, and which he felt he dare not sacrifice to a mere ceremonial ablution. These considerations create a strong presumption that John's baptism would require in its subjects a state of mind and heart in some measure accordant with the dignified object of "making ready a people prepared for the Lord." But let us glance at the facts of the case.—

(1.) John preached repentance, including religious reformation, to all who attended his ministry and submitted to his baptism. When he entered upon his honourable career, the first echo which his faithful voice



awakened in the wilderness of Judea was "repent!" "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Wherefore this preaching, if repentance was unnecessary as a qualification for baptism? Can we suppose the zealous reformer so inconsistent as to preface with earnest calls to repentance a baptism, which he was prepared to administer alike to penitent and impenitent?

(2.) The sacred narrative appears to convert this probability into fact. When the Scriptures style John's baptism "the baptism of repentance," the language naturally conveys the idea of an intimate connection between the ordinance and a specific preparedness of mind for its reception. Some indeed expound the phrases "baptism of repentance," and "baptism—*εἰς μετάνοιαν*—into repentance," as referring not to what precedes, but to what is expected to follow the administration of the rite. They accordingly render the expression "baptism *for* repentance." This rendering of *εἰς* after βαπτίζω or any of its derived nouns, we consider wholly unauthorized; and even if admissible, it does not necessarily imply that baptism precedes penitence. There may be baptism *for* repentance, in the sense of pledging the party to *carry out* and *complete* what had commenced *before* baptism; and indeed to baptize for repentance one who is utterly impenitent and hardened, would appear to us a strange religious operation. But as the correct translation is "baptism *into* repentance," the language clearly assumes the existence of sorrow for sin, and turning unto God, anterior to baptism, and as clearly involves an obligation to persevere in the spirit of such repentance. The moral state indicated by

μετάνοια is thus contemplated as both preceding and following the administration of John's baptism.

Still it will be alleged that though repentance entered into the preaching of the baptist, we have no proof of its presence in any profession made by the baptized. Let us test the truth of the allegation. In Mat. iii. 6, and Mark i. 5, we are expressly informed that the multitudes "were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins." This confession must have involved the essence of penitence, unless it was made *boastfully* or *indifferently*,—which will not be readily imagined. And that it preceded the baptism will scarcely be denied by any candid, unbiassed expositor of Scripture. "Confession," says Olshausen, "is to be viewed as *the condition* of baptism, . . . so that where confession was wanting, baptism also was refused." See also Fritzsche's *commentary* for the structure of the verse. So long as the record of this confession stands on the Gospel page, we must continue to maintain that John's baptism was not administered indiscriminately to all applicants.

(3.) Our view is confirmed by various incidental allusions in Scripture. Under this head, we have no hesitation in appealing to the baptist's address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Mat. iii. 7—9, in which he forcibly warns them that, instead of standing upon the ground of descent from Abraham, they must personally "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." The ordinance which they sought neither "scoffingly nor profanely," is not at once administered by John; but denouncing them as "serpents and a generation of vipers," he insists on their repentance as absolutely indispensable. This

was honest dealing; and it put forward faithfully and fearlessly the great condition of discipleship. Whether John “drove them from his baptism,” as Dr. Carson asserts, or admitted them to the ordinance, as is argued by Dr. Halley, the point on which we insist remains intact. If baptized at all, these Pharisees and Sadducees were baptized in accordance with John’s uncompromising doctrine of repentance and confession. This we must believe, unless we prefer a groundless charge against the baptist’s consistency. It appears, however, from such texts as Mat. xxi. 23—25, and Luke vii. 29, 30, that of the classes composing the Scribes, Pharisees, Elders, and Lawyers, very few had connected themselves with John’s reformation. Had the fact been otherwise, their position would have suggested a prompt answer to the question of our Saviour—“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” It will be said, in reference to the passage from Luke, that the Pharisees and lawyers who “rejected the counsel of God against themselves,” might have been baptized, had they applied for it;—and so doubtless they might, had they presented themselves with the profession of penitents, “confessing their sins.” Finally, it should be remembered that the Scripture more than once identifies the doctrine and baptism of John,—a circumstance which is most easily explicable on the ground that the recognition of the system formed a qualification for the observance of the symbol.

3. We are prepared to anticipate the same general principle in the relation of baptism to Christianity. It would be strange, if no religious qualification were requisite to an entrance into the church of Christ, professedly

the purest community out of heaven. "Baptism," Dr. Halley informs us, "is the sign of purification on being admitted into the kingdom of Christ." Under preceding economies, something in regard to profession and purposes was required of the candidate—would it not be at once unprecedented and inconsistent to admit the world unconditionally into the kingdom of Christ? Is that kingdom with its standing sign of purification, to be deluged by floods of impurity unrestrained and unfiltered? Against such an unhappy state of things there exists, we conceive, a strong antecedent probability, corroborated by the character and design of the Christian dispensation itself.

We must, however, bring the point to the test of positive Scripture testimony. This leads us of necessity to inquire into the terms of the apostolic commission, and into apostolic practice of which the commission constituted the warrant and the directory. The record of the commission by Matthew (xxviii. 19) is—"Go ye therefore, and (*μαθητεύσατε disciple*) teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Were Dr. Bloomfield's exposition of these words sound, we should have no difficulty in evincing the necessity of a religious profession, as a prerequisite to the baptism of an adult. The commission, in his view, embraces "three particulars, *μαθητεύειν, βαπτίζειν, and διδάσκειν, i.e.* 1. to disciple them to the faith; 2. to initiate them into the church by baptism; 3. to instruct them when baptized, in the doctrines and duties of a Christian life." That the procedure thus sketched is in substantive accordance with



the teachings of Scripture, we are not prepared to deny; but whether the author has rightly interpreted the language is a different question, and one in regard to which there is room for more than hesitation. It is no disparagement of God's word to hold that an isolated sentence may not bring out fully the mind of the Spirit on the subject to which it relates; and especially may we expect general and comprehensive directions to receive light from the course of action which they prescribe, and by which they have been carried into effect. With these precautions against being misunderstood, or misrepresented, we proceed to ascertain what qualifications the commission demands in a candidate for adult baptism.

1. It would, in our view, be unsafe to rest the argument for the necessity of a religious profession before baptism on the words—"Disciple all nations, baptizing them." Had the apostles been enjoined to disciple the nations, *and* baptize them, we could have seen our way in marking a broad line of distinction between the *discipling* and the *baptizing*; and following the natural order of the clauses, we should have felt warranted to insist on the discipleship, prior to the baptism. Provision would thus have been made for the requisite profession of faith, inasmuch as the idea of voluntary Christian discipleship to some extent manifestly implies such profession. But our Lord's command is,—"*Disciple* the nations, *baptizing* them,"—the structure of which by no means requires that the subject of baptism must have received previous Christian instruction. According to this view, baptism would merely constitute the action

to be performed in obeying the injunction to disciple all the nations. The authorities in support of this construction comprise men of the first talent, and of the most extensive learning. Kuinöl speaks of "those who had been admitted by baptism into the community of the Christians;" while he had previously interpreted *μαθητεύειν* as denoting such admission. "*Μαθητεύειν*," says he, "*non est edocere, . . . sed omnino notat discipulum facere, in cœtum Christianorum recipere*," &c. The same view is adopted by Fritzsche; and Olshausen represents the passage as misunderstood by those who extract from it the injunction,—“instruct first, and then baptize.” The structure he holds to be incompatible with this sense, as is evinced by his statement that “the two participles *βαπτίζοντες* and *διδασκοντες* go to compose the *μαθητεύειν*.”

The judgment of Lightfoot deliberately pronounced will exercise on many minds a more decided influence. That learned Hebraist, who brought the stores of Jewish literature to bear on the exegesis of the commission, explains the structure on the very principle adopted by Kuinöl and Olshausen. Disciples, he observes, are made not on the principle of having been previously instructed, but with a view to their training by the master whose disciples they become. This he illustrates by referring to a certain Gentile who said to Hillel the Great,—“Make me a proselyte in order that you may instruct me.” The party must first be *proselytized*, and afterwards taught. Lightfoot then applies his Rabbinical parallel to the commission—“*Sic μαθητεύσατε primum per baptismum, et deinde διδάσκετε αὐτούς*,” κ.τ.λ. With

such authors and arguments before us, it would be more valorous than safe to argue from μαθητεύσατε the necessity of religious instruction as a prerequisite to baptism. That the Scriptures enjoin such instruction we are persuaded; but our conviction is equally firm that the warrant for it cannot be found in the mere command to *disciple all the nations, baptizing them.*

2. The necessity of instruction previous to baptism, we hold to be implied in the language—"baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The connection between *discipleship* and *baptism* in the commission, no one will maintain to be incompatible with the idea of previous Christian instruction. If it were otherwise, an apostle would not have dared to open his mouth in proclaiming the gospel to sinners, until he had first baptized them. The way then must be open for instruction antecedent to baptism. This we learn from the character of the Christian religion, and the apostolic history of its propagation, just as we learn that the discipleship of the commission is not compulsory, but voluntary.

Now that baptism into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, necessitates at least previous Christian instruction we consider to be demonstrable. Would this baptism be consistent with utter, heathenish ignorance in the adult candidate? It is quite conceivable that a person in such deplorable circumstances might desire to be initiated by baptism into the Christian commonwealth. Dr. Halley admits it would be a desecration of the ordinance to baptize a man who applied for it in the spirit of scoffing and profanity,—and so far

he has our hearty concurrence. But we are constrained to aver that it would be equally an abuse of things sacred to administer baptism to one wholly unacquainted with its nature, the obligations it imposes, and the great name to which it gives so significant a prominence. To baptize into the name of Jesus an adult who, for aught the administrator knows, may have never heard of Jesus and his salvation, is a proceeding which we should consider opposed alike to the dictates of reason, and the disclosures of revelation. It appears to us impracticable to dispense with previous qualification in the shape of religious knowledge, and open or implied Christian profession, unless we obliterate that part of the commission which enjoins "baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

We are not sure that the views of Dr. Halley, as stated in some parts of his able volume, would permit him to contest our present position. Touching the mode of baptism in connection with the commission, he says, "To immerse, *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, into the name of the person *whose religion is professed*, is the religious rite of making proselytes, as to immerse into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is the appropriate act of the apostles and ministers of the gospel." Are we to understand that a profession of their adopted religion, suited to its character and requirements, is so necessary to qualify proselytes for admission by baptism, that the author is perfectly warranted in assuming or asserting its existence? Common sense answers in the affirmative. A profession open and manly, such as the Jews demanded of their proselytes, forms the natural



and appropriate entrance to the baptistery ; and if the rule applies to proselytism generally, it should be carried out with peculiar faithfulness in the case of converts to the religion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In our view of it, the baptismal service could not rank higher than a pagan mystery unless the ministers of religion see to it that adult candidates possess a knowledge of its general character and design, and evince dispositions so far removed from mockery and profanity, as to be in some measure accordant with the purity which it symbolizes and inculcates. The matter cannot be left to mere *implication*, as that would not afford, in any instance, a safeguard against the most profound ignorance, or enable the minister to cherish a rational hope of doing good by the service.

3. The necessity of a profession of faith prior to baptism is rendered more explicit by the language of Mark.—“ And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Chap. xvi. 16, 17. The closing section of this gospel (xvi. 9—20) of which these verses form a part, is considered spurious, or doubtful by many textual critics, as J. D. Michaelis, Bolten, Thiess, Griesbach, Bertholdt, D. Schulz, Schulthess, Fritzsche, Norton, and others. It is defended by such authors as Father Simon, Fabricius, Mill, Rosenmüller, Matthæi, Paulus, Kuinöl, Hug, Vater, and Lachmann. We are satisfied of its title to a place in the canon, and, therefore, feel at liberty to canvass these verses as inspired Scripture, though it does not consist

with our present object to sift the evidence, and compose conflicting views, or defend our own.

In the verses cited we recognise Mark's record of the apostolic commission. Like the parallel passage in Matthew, they contain the authoritative instruction which Christ addressed to his apostles respecting the execution of their arduous office. The form of the commission in the one evangelist differs from that in the other; but the substance appears to be one and unalterable. According to both, this solemn direction precedes our Lord's ascension to glory, and in each the preaching of the word, and the administration of baptism present an epitome of the leading duties of the Christian apostleship. Contemplated on the ground of mere structure, Matthew's is a commission to *preach and baptize*, Mark's a commission *simply to preach*; but the latter, in a promise appended to the commission strictly so called, introduces baptism as an ordinance which it was plainly the duty of the apostles to administer. "Go," said our Saviour, "and preach the gospel to every creature;" and he instantly subjoined, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Would not the disciples, in their peculiar circumstances, necessarily gather from this language, that the administration of baptism belonged to the office with which their risen Lord authoritatively invested them?

Let us now endeavour to elicit from the passage, the prescribed order of apostolic procedure in the administration of baptism. First in time, as well as in importance, stands the preaching of the gospel. This fact, we consider, has not received due attention in the discussion

of the text by Drs. Halley and Wardlaw. Without resting much weight on the collocation of clauses, we may be permitted to hold that in every fresh field of labour, preaching formed the commencement of apostolic ministration. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This we regard as in many respects a momentous utterance. In connection with our present argument, it supplies a starting point, of no inconsiderable value. When the commission in Matthew says, "Disciple all nations, baptizing them,"—it exhibits a construction in which the first place in the order of ministerial procedure seems to be assigned to baptism. He who will rest upon the mere syntax of the clause, is thereby warranted, if not bound, to contend for the priority of baptism to every other act of apostolic service. Preaching or teaching, according to this clause, must not be permitted to take precedence of baptism. Jew and Gentile must be *first* baptized, *then* taught. Not a word of gospel salvation, till the individual or the multitude, has been disciplined by baptism. However degraded and untutored, the nations must *first* be *baptized*! That the words immediately following, provide an antidote to the *virus* of this conclusion, we have endeavoured to evince: but the language of Mark happily settles the question. In the fore front of the labours of the apostle, he clearly ranges the preaching of the gospel. "Go, and preach the gospel to every creature." We shall presently show that the order thus indicated can produce the certificate of apostolic approval.

Why did God appoint the preaching of the gospel to precede the administration of baptism? What is the

design which this arrangement naturally suggests to the candid inquirer? Does it not point to the necessity of such qualifications for baptism as the nations did not possess without the preaching of the gospel? Had Jews and Gentiles been prepared to receive baptism, without intervening instruction, or impression, the ministry of reconciliation would, of course, have opened with the administration of the ordinance. But the gospel must first be preached—salvation must first be proclaimed—repentance and faith must first be inculcated. The object of all this, it may be said, was merely to produce on the part of those addressed, a voluntary and respectful application for baptism. In many instances this was doubtless one of the effects of the preaching of Christ crucified; but the object contemplated by the apostles was higher and holier. They summoned the world from sin to salvation—they urged upon all men “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Keeping in view this order of procedure, we perceive an obvious reason for placing faith, or a profession of faith, before baptism. “Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” In indicating our argument, we do not, with Dr. Wardlaw, confine ourselves to the clausal relation of belief to baptism: we take in the antecedent *preaching*, to which *belief* succeeds by a natural law of association; and thus we reach the conclusion that the faith of the text precedes its baptism. Unless some reason more potent than any we have met in the writings of Dr. Halley and others, can be brought forward to disturb



this order, we must adhere to it, as the order of the passage, the order of nature, the order of God. With reference to Mark xvi. 16, and the expression, "Repent and be baptized," Dr. H. says "From which words is ingeniously elicited a sort of argument that faith and repentance should precede baptism. But this ingenuity may be employed on the other side. 'And now why tarriest thou,' said Ananias to Saul, 'arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.' The argument from the order of the words,—sound or unsound, let others determine,—is that baptism should precede the washing away of sin."—*Lectures*, p. 505. Our argument, it will be seen, is not touched by Dr. Halley's counter-ingenuity, which attempts the exposure of reasonings founded on the mere collocation of words. We claim, whether justly or not, the support of authority higher and more substantial.—The proposed parallel from the *Acts of the Apostles* will meet us in our survey of apostolic baptisms in pursuance of the commission.

It may be objected that if this testimony proves any thing, it proves the necessity, not of a profession of faith, but of faith itself, as a qualification for baptism. The objection is not without weight, inasmuch as true faith alone is coupled with salvation. Still we hold it to be evidence of the necessity of a profession, on the principle that such profession is spoken of as faith before men, while in the sight of God the reality alone is faith. Thus the Scripture states that Simon Magus "believed and was baptized," though his was not the faith with which salvation stands connected. That he was not a true believer, and that he received baptism

on a profession of faith, are facts which we consider to be equally established by Scripture authority; and we shall have occasion, at a future stage, to refer to the case as illustrative of another peculiarity in this form of the commission.

We are solicitous that our estimate of the collocation of words and clauses should be clearly understood. When the Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized," "Repent and be baptized," we are not disposed to attach the slightest importance to the mere form of expression, apart from the revealed relations of repentance, faith, and baptism. Convinced that the arrangement is neither indifferent nor fortuitous, and that the order which it suggests is borne out by the character of Christianity, and the practice of its apostles, we are prepared to uphold it as embodying a principle of great value in the diffusion and maintenance of our holy religion.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

### A PROFESSION PREREQUISITE—APOSTOLIC PRACTICE.

BAPTISM BY THE APOSTLES AND OTHER MINISTERS NOT INDISCRIMINATELY ADMINISTERED.—A CREDIBLE PROFESSION OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH PREREQUISITE.—INSTANCES CITED AND CANVASSED :—BAPTISM OF THE THREE THOUSAND, ACTS II. 38, 41 :—OF THE SAMARITANS, ACTS VIII. 12, 13 :—OF THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER, ACTS VIII. 37—39 :—OF CORNELIUS, ACTS X. 47, 48 :—OF LYDIA, ACTS XVI. 14, 15 :—OF THE JAILOR AT PHILIPPI, XVI. 33 :—OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES, XIX. 1—5 :—OF SAUL BY ANANIAS, ACTS XXII. 16 ; IX. 18 :—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE RECORD OF APOSTOLIC BAPTISMS.

IN the administration of baptism by the apostles, the commission is fully developed and practically interpreted. This part of the sacred record possesses the deepest interest for every friend to the propagation of Christianity. If we would realize the force and anticipate the triumphs of “the faith once delivered unto the saints,” let us look to its cradle conquests over the brood of the serpent. If we would guide the aggressive movements of the gospel upon home and foreign heathenism, let us seek for a directory in the labours and devotedness of Christ's primeval ministers, who conducted the glorious enterprise, “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

The principle on which baptism was administered

especially to adults, must have powerfully affected the destinies of the early church; and as the practice of the apostles still possesses both interest and authority, the duty of ascertaining its character becomes the more pressing.

1. In Acts ii. 38, 41, we meet the first account of Christian baptism in execution of the commission.—“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.” This baptism presents a magnificent specimen of the first-fruits of the Spirit’s work in the conversion of souls by the preaching of the gospel. In the multitude addressed by Peter were doubtless numbers whose voices had swelled the tide of ferocious popular violence, which swept away the feeble efforts of Pilate to “release Jesus.” With terrible force therefore did the apostle charge home upon their conscience the dark guilt of crucifying that Saviour, whom God had “made both Lord and Christ.” The freshness of the great event must have given weight and pungency to a discourse that glowed with the hallowed fire of Pentecostal eloquence. By the divine blessing, the result was all that a Christian heart could desire, and more than could have been anticipated. “Stung to the heart,” the multitude in an agony of remorse and alarm, exclaimed, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The cheering answer was at hand. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name



of Jesus Christ." After much instruction and exhortation addressed to minds profoundly concerned on the subject of personal salvation, "those who gladly received his word were baptized," and the same day about three thousand souls were added *to the church*. See v. 47, with the comments of Kuinöl and Olshausen.

Is this an instance of baptism administered to a multitude, without regard to repentance, faith, or any prerequisite qualification? Let the facts answer the question.

(1.) Peter preaches a sermon of unsurpassed power, obviously designed, and by the agency of the Spirit, calculated to produce conviction of sin. Even this step does not seem very consistent with the policy of administering baptism to all applicants, irrespective of repentance, and, of course, of their state of mind and heart.

(2.) Conscience-stricken by the preaching of Christ crucified, and yearning for a salvation of which they almost despaired, the multitude are exhorted to "*repent and be baptized*." Repentance *first*, baptism *afterward*. This is evident to a demonstration; for had the apostles simply directed them to submit to baptism, undoubtedly their compliance would have been prompt, cordial, and universal, and the "many other words" of exhortation could have been dispensed with. If repentance, knowledge, profession, are not Scripture qualifications for the ordinance, why should the apostles interpose long preachings, when eager thousands are ready to receive the initiatory ablution? It is worthy of remark also that the repentance which here precedes baptism, must have

been something more than mere sorrow for sin, or the terror of conscious guilt; for *that* the multitude felt most poignantly at the moment the apostles exhorted them to “repent.”

(3.) This baptism was administered not to the people at large, but to professed converts. We are not told that the whole multitude was baptized, nor even that the rite was administered to all who made application. The desire of candidates is not presented as the ground or directory of apostolic procedure; on the contrary the cordial reception of the gospel constitutes the practical qualification for baptism. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.” This language discloses an important principle of discrimination. It is not said that all gladly received his word—nay the statement rather implies the existence of exceptions—and the baptism is thus limited by a very suitable qualification in the candidates. It appears then, so far as we have proceeded, that conviction of sin, repentance, and the glad reception of the word distinguished the parties to whom alone this apostolic baptism was administered.

(4.) The admission of the baptized to church-membership with all its privileges, instantly followed their baptism. They were added to the church, “and they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” *v.* 42. We are aware of nothing in the shape of argument, militating against this position. Writers indeed allege that sufficient opportunity was not afforded for judging of the repentance and faith of these new converts. But if the allegation be founded, will it not prove too much?

It lies upon the face of the narrative that the profession which served these converts for baptism, opened to them the door of the Christian church, and secured their admission to the Lord's table. As regards the prerequisite necessity of repentance and faith, therefore, both ordinances are here placed upon precisely the same foundation. In drawing this conclusion we are fully aware that the "breaking of bread" is applied by some to the Agapae or love-feasts of the early Christians, and by others, to their common meals. Its reference to the Lord's Supper we hold to be triumphantly defensible.

As the shortness of the interval between repentance and baptism is not confined to the case of the three thousand, it will be more orderly to reserve its consideration for the close of our survey of apostolic baptisms. The only point, which appears to raise an objection to our view of the passage, is connected with the expression *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*. Does the sacred writer contemplate the remission of sins as preceding or following baptism? Unless the formula\* *βαπτίζειν εἰς*

\* The import of the expression *βαπτίζειν τινὰ εἰς τινα*, or *εἰς τι* is still agitated among the most accomplished interpreters of Scripture. A thorough discussion of the entire question would be desirable; but we can merely offer a few hints at present on the aspect of it with which we are immediately concerned. Vitringa, in his *Observ. Sacrae*, iii. 22, understands *εἰς* as denoting "into the acknowledgment of;" a sense which is obviously too limited to meet all the occurrences, though it continues to command pretty general acceptance. Kuinöl on our text, and on Mat. iii. 11, takes *εἰς* to be expressive of the design, or end in view (*finem, consilium*); that is, "Be baptized, *that* you may receive pardon." Dr. Halley does not like this exegesis, nor do I. It was adopted by Fritzsche on Mat.; but in his more recent work on Romans (vi. 3,) he rejects it as not sufficiently comprehensive. His

*ἄφεσις* necessarily conveys the priority of baptism to pardon of sin, we would not consider it entitled to disturb our exposition of the verses. But it will not be pretended that the formula is not legitimately susceptible of a different interpretation; and, therefore, we must regard any argument founded on it as utterly inadequate to drive us from our stronghold.

2. The introduction of the gospel to the Samaritans furnishes the next instance: Acts viii. 12, 13, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered,

new theory assigns to the formula the *general notion of directing the thoughts of the baptized to some person, or object*,—which he thus applies to our text.—"*Ita lavari, ut (futura) peccatorum venia tibi monstretur.*" Where does the author find *futura*? Does baptism always, or of necessity, precede remission of sins? If an apostle in any instance baptized a true believer, it was baptism *ἐἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, not as a *future* blessing, but one already conferred. Krehl, on Romans, explains the formula as meaning, "To obtain (durch die Taufe) through, or by means of baptism, the forgiveness of sins," an interpretation for which he deserves the best thanks of Dr. Pusey.—Among the older critics, Piscator understands by the words—"in testimonium atque confirmationem remissionis peccatorum,"—*as a token and confirmation of the forgiveness of sins*. Poole takes the same view, though its basis is scarcely broad enough.—Stuart thinks *ἐἰς* with the idea of *participation* will suit all the passages, and afford in all a good sense. The *ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν* is represented by Olshausen (in loc.) as the *result of baptism*, though baptism, he says, "necessarily presupposes faith." It can then be a *result* only as regards *experience*,—for *faith* and *forgiveness* go together. We find no such form as "Be baptized (*ἵνα*) that you may receive pardon:"—and βαπτίζειν *ἐἰς*, *to baptize into*, has



beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” This passage teaches us in terms sufficiently clear that the baptism of the Samaritans was preceded by the profession of their faith. “*When* they believed, they were baptized.” So far the case demands little comment, being in perfect keeping with that of the Jerusalem converts already canvassed. But the abettors of indiscriminate baptism fancy they have discovered a fortress in the admission to the same privilege, of Simon Magus, who soon gave melancholy evidence that though baptized, he was still “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” What benefit their cause can derive from the history of the Samaritan sorcerer, we confess we cannot perceive. Had Simon been baptized without a profession of faith,—had the Scriptures even

no such meaning. By *baptism into the remission of sins*, we understand baptism administered to a professed believer in Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, just as John’s baptism *into repentance*, was the baptism of professed penitents, who were baptized “confessing their sins.” Baptism *for* repentance, *for* remission of sins, so far as we know, is an unauthorized rendering, though the mistake in which it probably originated admits of easy explanation. The force of the formula is not exclusively retrospective. In the case of John’s followers, repentance preceded the ordinance; but was not to cease with its administration. The baptized, on the contrary, were bound by their baptism to carry out the spirit of that repentance through life; and a similar pledge, modified by the circumstances of the baptism, we hold to be involved in every occurrence of the formula. The baptized are *debtors*, as the circumcised were debtors. Whether we baptize *into* Christ’s death, *into* repentance, *into* remission of sins, &c., we do not *create*, we only *recognise* the relation presumed to subsist between the parties being adults and that into which they are baptized, while the baptism pledges them to a certain course of conduct. How infant baptism may be affected by this view, which we merely indicate, will appear at a future stage, in meeting an objection brought by Dr. Carson.

maintained silence on the point,—his baptism would have presented an aspect which a little ingenuity might have turned to some account. But the record of the entire transaction is in complete and emphatic accordance with our views of the necessity of certain qualifications for baptism. Simon, we are expressly told, “believed”—made a profession of faith, and on this profession which was doubtless satisfactory to Philip, he was admitted to the ordinance of Christian baptism. It is true, indeed, as Dr. Halley asserts, that “good men were baptized by the apostles, and so were bad men;” but we are not aware of a solitary instance, and he has produced none, in which the rite was administered to any but professed believers. It is distinctly intimated in the case of Simon, that a profession of faith, considered at the time to be genuine, preceded his baptism, and was regarded as a prerequisite. Still farther, the narrative appears to make this conclusion general. The sorcerer was not among the first in Samaria to embrace Christianity. Others believed, and were baptized before him. Then follows the announcement that Simon believed, assuming as a matter of course, that, according to apostolic practice, belief must precede baptism. If faith, or a profession of faith, formed an acknowledged prerequisite to baptism, this order in the history is both natural and instructive; while we see no legitimate method of reconciling it with the hypothesis of indiscriminate baptism.

3. The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 37, 38, now claims our attention. In the preceding verse, the treasurer of Candace had said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”—*v.* 37,

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” It must be candidly admitted that the evidence for the genuineness of this verse is quite too slender to entitle it to the place in the text which it has long occupied. These words which represent Philip as requiring, and the eunuch as making a certain profession of faith, all the great editors of the New Testament, from Mill to Lachmann, have cancelled as spurious, or marked as unsupported by adequate authority :—in this state of the evidence without entering into the matter, we at once decide against employing the testimony of the verse in support of our views.

On the other hand we do not deem our argument much impaired by the omission. “We ascertain from the narrative,” says Dr. Halley, “that a stranger utterly ignorant of the gospel was baptized after a few hours’ instruction,—a fact explicable only upon the theory that baptism was readily administered to all who desired it.”—p. 518. But this representation does summary injustice to the merits of the case, which embraces some instructive peculiarities. We request the reader to weigh deliberately the following connected points :—

(1.) The Spirit of God instructed Philip to join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian. Was not this equivalent to a divine pledge, that the *evangelist’s* preaching would be signally blessed to a man of great influence? (2.) When Philip reached the chariot, he found the object of his mission reading the Bible. Though a stranger to Philip, this man was happily not a stranger to the word of God. This formed another

hopeful circumstance. (3.) At Jerusalem where the Ethiopian had been to worship, he had in all probability heard of Jesus Christ. The likelihood of this is well brought out by several of our leading commentators. (4.) The passage which he read (Isa. liii.) was well fitted to direct his mind to the Saviour. May not the Spirit that directed Philip to the chariot, have guided the eunuch to this appropriate portion of Scripture? (5.) The modest promptitude of the Ethiopian to receive instruction attests a state of heart congenial to the faith of the gospel. Like our Lord's disciples, he was very ignorant, but very willing to learn. Not offended by the humiliating question of Philip, he invites him to mount his chariot, listens to the message of salvation, and requests to be baptized. (6.) The ordinance was here administered by that evangelist, who a short time previously had baptized the Samaritans *when they believed*, and Simon Magus *when he believed*; and in common consistency he could not have adopted a different course in baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch. Combining these considerations with the fact that after his baptism this man "went on his way rejoicing" as a Christian convert, we conceive we have solid reason for maintaining that his baptism was preceded by a religious profession.

4. The baptism of Cornelius the centurion, with his kinsmen, introduces us to Gentile converts. Acts x. 47, 48, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In addressing these parties, Peter had urged the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, to



whom gave “all the prophets witness that through his name *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*” But as this was the first instance of Gentile conversion, and as the apostle placed in new circumstances, must have felt great hesitation, God imparted to Cornelius and his friends the supernatural gifts of his Spirit as the visible warrant of heaven for admitting them to baptism. These gifts generally followed the ordinance, but in this instance they were communicated previously for reasons of obvious wisdom and beneficence. That both Peter and the church in Jerusalem regarded this outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Gentiles as the seal of God to their faith and repentance is evident from Acts xi. 17, 18, “Forasmuch then, as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us *who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ,* what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” In this instance the evidence of faith as a prerequisite to baptism appears to us to lack no element which can give it power in carrying our convictions. Dr. Halley, however, alleges his prize objection, to the effect that Cornelius and his friends “were baptized on the day on which they first heard the preaching of the gospel.” Its validity in the present case may be left to the judgment of every candid reader.

5. The baptism of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 15, requires only a passing notice. She was one who “worshipped God,” and when the gospel message came, “the Lord opened her heart that she attended to the things which

were spoken of Paul.” Immediately after her baptism, she besought Paul and Silas, “saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.” Was not this woman a professed convert? The Spirit characterizes her as a worshipper of God even before she was visited with the gospel, and when the “glad tidings” arrived, the Lord opened her heart; and being judged faithful to the Lord, she was baptized. If any choose, in the face of this evidence to call Lydia an unbeliever, or insinuate that her profession was not credible, we have only to express our earnest desire that many such unbelievers would present themselves for admission into our churches.

The family of Lydia, it has been suggested, may have contained adults; and the question arises, on what terms did they share in an ordinance which was administered to all the household? There is, we think, no real difficulty in reaching the true answer. If there were adults, the terms on which the apostle baptized them must have been the same as those on which he baptized Lydia herself. The known must guide us in determining the unknown. With the grounds of Lydia’s baptism we are acquainted, and we confidently apply the same principles to the hypothetical case in the recorded baptism of her household. A credible profession of faith on their part, as on hers, plainly constituted the requisite qualification.

6. Acts xvi. 33, narrates the baptism of the Philipian jailor. Amid the shock of an earthquake, and apprehensive that his prisoners had escaped, this man was on the point of committing self-destruction. But

reassured by the friendly voice of Paul, “he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” That he meant salvation in a spiritual sense is manifest, and this fact shows us that in seeking religious direction he was not an utter stranger at least to the character and office of those whom he addressed. The question was answered by Paul in a manner equally brief and satisfactory:—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Not to baptism, but to belief in the Christ did the apostle, in the first instance, direct the anxious and alarmed inquirer. Nor did the ordinance immediately follow the first earnest exhortation to faith in the Saviour. The apostles proceeded (*v.* 32) to speak “unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” Concerned for his spiritual state, and that of his house, they opened up more fully the glad tidings of salvation. This was no unmeaning parade, no empty ceremony conducted by men who were prepared to baptize the jailor, whether or not he professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That the Gospel message was received by him with all readiness of mind, it appears to us, in view of all the circumstances, no easy matter to doubt; and besides, his baptism as a professed believer is the only hypothesis that can maintain a shadow of consistency between the apostles’ faithful *preaching of the word*, and their *administration of the ordinance*. The jailor’s reception of the word paved the way for his admission to the ordinance; and, as the happy result, “he rejoiced, believing (exercising faith)

in God, with all his house.” “He is not said,” as Dr. Wardlaw well observes, “to have believed afterwards, but to have ‘rejoiced believing.’ It is the joy, not the faith, that is recorded as subsequent.”

7. We solicit a moment’s attention to the case of the disciples of John whom Paul rebaptized, Acts xix. 1—5. These twelve men, says Dr. Halley, “on the very strictest interpretation of their words, had never heard of the effusion of the Pentecost, and of the plenitude of miraculous gifts conferred upon the church;” yet they were baptized “after a brief exposition—of the testimony which John—had borne to Jesus as the Christ.”—p. 525. The author does not inform us that the sacred narrative styles these men *disciples*, and that Paul addresses them as persons who had *believed*. That the terms *disciples* and *believed* employed in this absolute manner, refer to Christ, is the view embraced by learned interpreters of various schools, and it seems to be sustained by New Testament usage. These persons, then, were in some sense disciples of Christ, when Paul found them; and though their religious knowledge was extremely defective, yet their attention to Paul’s preaching argued a moral preparedness to receive the full message of salvation. “When they heard” the apostle—heard doubtless of the crucified and exalted Messiah, and of salvation through him,—the theme which Paul never kept in the back ground,—“they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” The *hearing* predicated of these men, in connection with what follows, clearly implies assent to the doctrine promulgated, and professed belief in Jesus Christ, “whom Paul preached.”



For this they were prepared by the intermediate dispensation of John, and especially by their recognised relation to the Messiah, to whom John's baptism pointed. The consequent effusion of the Holy Spirit in his supernatural influences we are constrained to regard as a crowning testimony to that faith in the profession and exercise of which these disciples made a baptismal dedication of themselves to the Lord Jesus.

8. The baptism of Saul by Ananias forms the last instance. Acts xxii. 16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Comp. ix. 10—18, and xxvi. 16—18. "Why tarriest thou?" "Nothing else," says Dr. Halley, "was delayed than his baptism, yet this was manifestly the first interview of Saul with a Christian on friendly terms," p. 519. What though it was the first interview? That neither proves Saul destitute of repentance and faith, nor Ananias ignorant that Saul possessed these qualifications. Ananias and Saul did not meet as strangers. The Lord had informed Ananias that Saul was *a chosen vessel* to bear his name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, ix. 15. With such an introduction, and finding the lion persecutor changed into a lamb, is it wonderful that Ananias urged Saul to be baptized? The strongest advocate for prerequisite penitence and faith, we are satisfied, would not hesitate to administer the ordinance in similar circumstances. But observes Dr. Halley, "the language of Ananias implies that, when he exhorted Saul to be baptized, he did not consider the persecutor to have obtained the forgiveness of his sins."—"Ananias did

not require the washing away of sin as a prerequisite to baptism ; that is, Ananias did not administer believers' baptism."—*ibid.*

Was Saul, we ask, in reality an unbeliever, or regarded as such by Ananias, when he urged him to be baptized? The questions are distinct, and it is *possible*, one may be answered in the affirmative, and the other in the negative. In regard to the former, we see no room for doubt or hesitation. Without reference to points of controversy, we were accustomed to speak of Saul's conversion on the way to Damascus, when he saw the Lord Jesus in a manifestation of subduing splendour and impressiveness, and heard the words of his mouth designating him to the office of the Christian apostleship, with its trials and its triumphs. We imagined also that the persecutor gave sufficient evidence of the reality of his conversion, by instantly exchanging a career of atrocity and blood, for a course of humble obedience to the voice of the Lord Jesus. Still farther, when the Lord said of Saul, prior to his baptism, "Behold he prayeth," we recognised in this exercise the first-fruits of a change of heart effected by the saving grace of God. Nor have we yet seen cause to alter these views, which are very generally taken by intelligent men, who study the passage for instruction and edification. Dr. Bennett, for instance, one of Dr. Halley's Independent brethren, and author of the *Theology of the Early Christian Church*, one of the series of the Congregational Lectures, maintains that "there can be no rational doubt, that the Lord had already forgiven Saul, *when he appeared* to him to make

him a minister and a witness.”—*Lectures on Acts*, p. 147.

It remains for us to inquire whether Ananias regarded Saul as an unbeliever, when he admonished him to be baptized. We take the negative of the question. We gather from the narrative that on visiting Saul, the first act of Ananias (ix. 17,) was *putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*. Did Ananias perform this act on a reputed unbeliever? How we are to reconcile this *laying on of hands*, in order to the bestowment of the gifts of the Spirit, with the supposition that Saul was regarded as an unbeliever, we know not, and Dr. Halley has not told us. Ananias also addressed him as “*Brother Saul*,”—to which Dr. Halley attaches little weight, stating that Peter might have called Cornelius a “brother,”—though he happened not to do so; and that “Paul called the whole Jewish council ‘brethren,’ although there was not a Christian among them.”—*Reply to Stovel and Wardlaw*, p. 188. But it is not the mere application of “brother,” that constitutes the sinews of the argument; but “brother” in a specific connection. Had Paul said to the Jewish council, “brethren, the Lord Jesus sent me to put my hands on you, that ye might be filled with the Holy Ghost,”—the man who doubted the Christianity of the members, must have had his own opinion of the sanity of the apostle. Does any one believe that Ananias would have called him “brother Saul,” had not the Lord assured him that Saul was no longer a persecutor, but a chosen witness and minister of Jesus Christ? On such

grounds we contend that Ananias considered Saul, prior to his baptism, to be a believer, and therefore pardoned and accepted through faith in Jesus Christ.

How then are we to dispose of the language—"Be baptized, and wash away thy sins?" "The washing away of his sins by baptism," says Dr. Bennet, "was the public sign and testimony of forgiveness, which had previously taken place before God; as 'Abraham our father received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.'"—*ibid.* Very different is the sense which Dr. Halley elicits from the words of Ananias. "We have," says he "just the same reason for believing that Ananias thought Saul had not previously washed away his sins, as we have that he thought Saul had not previously been baptized, since he exhorted the persecutor to do both the one and the other without delay."—p. 520. This must be a truism in *some sense* of the phrase "washing away sin;" but whether it is correct in Dr. Halley's sense, is quite another question. We find great diversity of meaning extracted from these words, not merely by controversialists, but by our ablest critics and commentators. Calvin's exposition will amply reward a perusal:—its nature may be perceived from the following sentences. "Quatenus ergo fidem nostram adjuvat Baptismus, ut remissionem peccatorum percipiat ex solo Christi sanguine, lavacrum animæ vocatur. Ita ablutio, cujus meminit Lucas, non causam designat, sed *ad sensum Pauli refertur*, qui symbolo accepto *peccata sua expiata esse melius cognovit*."—*Calv. in Nov. Test.* iv. 425. There is here at least much



verisimilitude. To be pardoned, and to realize the forgiveness of our sins are different things, and it is to the latter that Calvin applies the direction, “wash away thy sins.” Schleusner (in v. ἀπολούω) renders the expression,—“Baptismo suscepto purga te ab omni vitiositate, seu renuntia omni vitiositati,”—thus understanding it to denote, not the *forgiveness*, but the *forsaking* of sin, which is, at all events, a moral duty. Baptism in this connection, according to Dr. Bloomfield, “was a token of a desire to be cleansed from sin, as the body was by water cleansed from its pollution.” See *Recen. Synop.* v. 86. “The words βάπτισαι and ἀπόλουσαι,” says Stuart, “appear to be treated as in a manner equivalent to each other; and the natural conclusion would seem to be, that *washing* or *washing off*, was the manner of the baptism on this occasion.”—*On Bap.* p. 51. “The real amount of the injunction,” Dr. Halley contends, “is,—Believe on him whose blood cleanseth from all sin.” How diverse from the interpretation of Olshausen who maintains that “Baptism is here manifestly conceived of as the *act of purging away sin*, the ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν.”

Without multiplying opinions or authorities, we shall offer one or two remarks. Dr. Halley’s exegesis we consider to be encumbered with great difficulties. Where else in Scripture, does the washing away of one’s sins denote faith in him whose blood cleanseth from all sin? By what laws of interpretation is that sense elicited in this passage? Again the *washing*, as Stuart notices, sustains a peculiar relation to the *baptism*, presenting an arrangement similar to Hebrew parallelism. If the

injunction to *wash*, formed the *leading* or sole point, as in Isa. i. 16, the sense, we apprehend, would be different, though not equivalent to *believe*. Substituting for the injunction Dr. Halley's amount of the injunction, we have,—“Be baptized, *and believe on him whose blood cleanseth from all sin*, calling on the name of the Lord.” This suggests another difficulty. The substituted clause does not seem very congruous with the last part of the verse. To *baptize* or *wash*, *calling* on the Lord, is a plain and natural mode of expression; but to *believe on Jesus*, *calling* on the Lord, appears to lie out of the common path of Scripture phraseology. Besides, were it proved that the washing away of sin means believing in Jesus Christ, it would still be a subject of inquiry whether the *believing* refers to the commencement, or to the subsequent exercise of saving faith. We greatly prefer the interpretation of Calvin, though it is not entirely unobjectionable. It seems to proceed upon the principle that when *God washes us*, we are pardoned;—when *we are said to wash ourselves*, we realize that pardon in the exercise of faith upon the Lord Jesus. But in the two-fold injunction, *Βάπτισαι, καὶ ἀπόλουσαι*, we understand *baptism*, and *washing* to denote the same rite, viewed under different aspects. The former exhibits the ordinance under its appropriated name; the latter presents before us its spiritual character as symbolic of purification. How was Saul to enter into the symbol—how wash away his sins? Was it, as Calvin holds, by realizing through faith the pardoning mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and thus enjoying the comfort of forgiveness? Or may it not have been rather by enter-

ing, in baptism, upon a course of new and evangelical obedience, in prayerful dependence on that Saviour who had called him “to glory and virtue?” This view which an examination of the metaphorical *use* of *washing* in Scripture, suggested to us some time since, is advocated by Rosenmüller in his *Scholia* on Isaiah i. 16, p. 41; and we throw it out for honest and dispassionate consideration.

Having reviewed the Scripture testimonies in detail, we are prepared for some general observations.

I. A full induction of instances warrants the conclusion that the New Testament knows no adult baptism irrespective of a credible profession of faith in Christ. This statement stands in direct antagonism to the conclusion at which Dr. Halley arrives as the fruit of an examination of the same instances of baptism by the apostles. “Were any one,” says he, “to form his opinion from these historical notices, without any previous bias, would he not conclude that baptism was indiscriminately administered without any qualification whatever? There is not in one of them the slightest intimation of any prerequisite whatever. (!)” Dr. Halley is of course entitled to hold and defend his opinion, and we are equally entitled to affirm that one more utterly unfounded we have seldom met. We cannot unite with Dr. Wardlaw in charging him with “recklessness,” for we sincerely respect the author, and believe him to have exercised a deliberate conscientious judgment, even where we differ most widely from his views. We simply refer the reader to our preceding examination of the evidence in detail, while we confi-

dently appeal to every recorded case of apostolic baptism for proof of the fact that repentance and faith professed, were uniformly regarded as requisite qualifications for the ordinance. A profession may to some extent be implied in merely applying for, or submitting to the ordinance; but we do not trust to implication. What we contend for is that present sorrow for sin, and looking unto Jesus for salvation, professed by candidates for baptism, and believed by the administrator, in the judgment of charity, to be genuine, form prerequisite qualifications for the ordinance; and these qualifications more or less fully developed we find in all examples of New Testament baptism.

II. The lax theory places much dependence on the fact that in apostolic times, baptism was administered without delay on a profession of faith in Christ. "If the New Testament were intended," says Dr. Halley, "to teach us that only believers, or such as were judged to be faithful, were proper subjects of Christian baptism, it is remarkable that a selection of instances should have been given, of the greater number of which the administrator could have no satisfactory evidence that the persons baptized had previously washed away their sins; and in all, the profession of faith in Christ, which, we are told, ought to be credible, (if any thing worthy of that name existed,) could not have been of more than a few hours' standing."—p. 526. With reference to the shortness of the interval, in early times, between a profession of faith, and the administration of baptism, we observe that delay is necessary and warrantable only so far as it may contribute to render the profession rationally



credible. Hence it follows that delay is not, in every instance, requisite. No man ought to delay baptism for the sake of mere delay; and again no reasonable man will deny that a profession of faith “of a few hours’ standing” may, in certain circumstances be perfectly satisfactory. We think this statement fairly applicable to such cases as those of Cornelius, Saul, the Philippian jailor, Lydia, and the treasurer of queen Candace. Sceptical indeed must that apostle or evangelist have been on the subject of a credible profession of faith, who could have refused baptism to any of these parties, or hesitated a moment respecting the propriety of its immediate administration. Tertullian who held strong views on the propriety of delaying baptism in certain cases, thus anticipates an objection to his doctrine, arising out of the prompt procedure of Philip and Ananias.—“Si Philippus tam facile tinxit eunuchum, recogitemus *manifestam et exsertam dignationem domini*. . . . Dominus ostenditur, fides non moratur, aqua non expectatur, apostolus perfecto negotio eripitur.”—*Tertul. Op.* ii. 45. Leip. 1839. Again this father says,—“Paulus revera cito tinctus est; cito enim cognoverat Simon (Ananias) hospes vas eum esse electionis constitutum.”—*ibid.*

III. It follows from this delineation of apostolic practice, that there may also be circumstances in which the delay of baptism becomes a bounden duty. If application for the ordinance “appears to be made scoffingly or profanely,” Dr. Halley himself is an advocate for delay, on the very proper ground that compliance would amount to “a manifest desecration.” It is not for us to say by what authority the writer constitutes this the

sole exception to the immediate administration of baptism. The scoffing or profanity he must righteously regard as the index of a state of feeling wholly incompatible with the character of the ordinance; and if the moral state of the candidate is to be taken into account at all, we should require some adequate reason for rejecting none *but those who apply with obtrusive scoffing and profanity*. We have no idea of the practicability of eliciting or even inferring this singular rule of procedure from the record of apostolic baptisms.

Baptism was administered without delay to the three thousand converts at Jerusalem, and the case is appealed to as furnishing a triumphant defence of the latitudinarian system. But did not these converts, prior to baptism, evince the deepest distress and alarm on account of sin, coupled with the expression of an earnest solicitude to obtain salvation; and when the gospel message was announced to them in all its appropriate and generous provisions, did they not discover so much of the spirit of faith as justified the sacred historian in stating that "they gladly received the word." They thus stood forward publicly and resolutely to embrace a cause which was covered with scorn and obloquy by the dominant party, and which the rulers of the Jews were ready to crucify as they had crucified its wonderful Founder. Now even with my rooted convictions of the necessity of delaying baptism in certain cases, I cannot see that my principles would interfere with its immediate administration to these three thousand converts at Jerusalem. With a similar profession, or one attended with equal evidence of truthfulness, I should feel abun-

dantly satisfied. The conduct of the apostles in this and other cases I regard as furnishing indirectly a powerful argument for delay, in such circumstances as cast doubt on the credibility of the profession, or even withhold from it all positive confirmation. A profession of a satisfactory character all the recorded instances concur in representing to be indispensable. If the circumstances in which the profession is made render it at once satisfactory, no scriptural ground is laid for the delay of baptism. But if the profession be attended by circumstances which on candid and charitable consideration, strip it of credibility, delay we should then hold to be an imperative duty on the very principle involved in the administration of the ordinance by the apostles.

IV. In the subsequent history of Christianity, various causes contributed to the delay of baptism. Considerable diversity of procedure has been found to be perfectly compatible with the honest and faithful working out of the same great principle. If the ministers of Christ, as Clemens Alexandrinus states, preached the gospel, and baptized (τοὺς πιστεύοντας) those who believed, it is not difficult to perceive that this course would, in one case, demand delay, while in another it would impose the duty of immediate administration. But, in addition to this, on a comparison of apostolic with succeeding times, we readily detect in the latter certain elements which appear to justify a delay not called for in the former. Among these elements may be mentioned the cessation of that kind of superintendence which the Lord personally, or by the Holy Spirit, exercised in the age of the apostles, as for instance in the case of Saul, and of Cornelius.

Again, when the religion of Jesus was a poor and powerless cause, scowled upon by the priesthood, the rulers, and the enslaved and superstitious millions, there existed a strong antecedent probability that those who stood forward to enrol themselves under her standard, were actuated by sterling and profound conviction. The men who pledge themselves to any interest in the hour of its weakness and peril, are generally men of devoted hearts, the choicest specimens of our common humanity. There is, in fact, no room for the suspicion of sinister motive, and the profession made in such circumstances we cannot help admitting to be credible. On the other hand, when the same religion attains power and popularity, and the world's wealth in rich profusion flows into the coffers of the church, her new position, provided she adhere to the original principles, will necessitate a more cautious policy in the admission of professed converts. This has been felt both in the Jewish and Christian churches. We are told by learned Rabbis that, in the most prosperous days of the ancient economy, amid the conquests of the reign of David, and the splendours of the kingdom of Solomon, no proselytes were admitted to the privileges of Judaism, on the ground that strong suspicions of insincerity or worldliness, must have attached to their profession. Such procedure, real or imaginary, doubtless forms a culpable extreme; and the delay often practised by the early Christians, we are not prepared to defend. But that measures should be taken by the church, whether Christian or Jewish, to prevent her success in the world from accomplishing the ruin of her spirituality, is the common dictate of reason and religion.



The connection of the preceding statements with the restricted, and, as we believe, Scriptural view of infant baptism, has been already adverted to, and its importance is sustained by the judgment of the ablest evangelical divines. "If it be necessary," says the great Jonathan Edwards, "that *adult* persons should make a profession of godliness, in order to their own admission to *baptism*, then undoubtedly it is necessary in order to their *children* being baptized on their account. For parents cannot convey to their children a right to this sacrament by virtue of any qualifications *lower* than those requisite in order to their own right: children being admitted to baptism only as being, as it were, parts and members of their parents. And besides, the act of parents in offering up their *children* in a sacrament, which is a seal of the *covenant of grace*, is in them a solemn attending that sacrament *as* persons *interested* in the covenant, and a public manifestation of their approving and consenting to it, as truly as if they had then offered up *themselves* to God in that ordinance. Indeed it implies a renewed offering up themselves with their children, and devoting both jointly to God in covenant; *themselves*, with their children, as parts of themselves."—*Works*, vol. i. p. 476. It is merely necessary to add that the principle on which baptism is administered to adults, justly as well as by common consent, directs and controls the admission of infants to the ordinance, and hence the preceding investigations will considerably facilitate our future labour, and tend to exhibit the remaining part of the discussion under a less complicated and repulsive aspect.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

### EVIDENCE FOR INFANT BAPTISM ARRANGED.

THE EVIDENCE AND ITS ARRANGEMENT VARIOUSLY VIEWED BY DIFFERENT CLASSES OF WRITERS.—SOME NOT ONLY COMMENCE WITH THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION, BUT SUSPEND ALMOST THE ENTIRE ARGUMENT ON ITS TESTIMONY.—THAT COURSE REJECTED IN THIS TREATISE, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMISSION.—CONSTITUTION AND STATE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH NOT TO BE NEGLECTED BY THE STUDENT OF THE NEW ECONOMY.—COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM THE TRUE STARTING POINT, AND THE EVIDENCE TO BE TRACED CHIEFLY IN THE ORDER OF HISTORY.—REASONS FOR THIS ARRANGEMENT.

HAVING disposed of the question relating to the Scriptural qualifications for adult baptism, our next business is to show that the baptism of infants, in the restrictive sense already specified, is “agreeable to, and founded on the word of God.” A point affecting so essentially the constitution and character of the Christian church, claims the most deliberate and prayerful investigation. Scripture testimony in support of our position we hold to be both ample and decisive; and we are called upon to adduce it on correct principles of arrangement, and to estimate its force with impartiality and candour.

Among writers who espouse conflicting opinions on this branch of the controversy, we have observed marked

diversity in the order of arranging the materials which are universally acknowledged to be more or less necessary for determining the Scriptural subjects of the ordinance. By one class of authors the decision of the entire question appears to be suspended on the evidence of the apostolic commission; and these generally place that document, or their own version of it, in the forefront of the argument, while opposing considerations derived from the Abrahamic covenant and other sources are dealt with as so many difficulties or objections. The advocates for Pædobaptism commonly pursue a very different course. With many of them the testimony believed to be furnished by the ancient economy takes the lead in place if not in importance; while, in some treatises, the patriarchal principle of admission to church membership, combined with the household baptisms recorded in the New Testament, is permitted to decide the point, without special regard to the voice of the commission. In some recent works in support of Pædobaptism, the argument founded on the analogy of circumcision is in whole or in part abandoned, and the authors at once join issue with their opponents on the ground of the commission, as interpreted practically in the record of apostolic baptisms. Dr. Carson also occupies this ground, and enters at once upon the exegesis of the commission without reference to those anterior considerations which appear to us indispensable to a sound and enlightened interpretation of that important document. We do not indeed object to the value and the prominence which this acute author assigns to the commission; but we hold that if it is

to be thoroughly understood in the depth and breadth of its import, we must first apply our minds to the examination of the primitive church, its organization, covenant character, and Scriptural membership, and especially its symbolic rite of initiation. The propriety of beginning at the fountain-head will, it is conceived, appear from the following remarks.—

1. The law of admission to the Christian church may be expected to receive light from Scriptural views of divine legislation on the same subject under former economies. The New Testament, all parties grant, cannot be rightly understood without an intimate knowledge of the Old. The idiom, imagery, and thoughts of the Hebrew Scriptures may be traced in every page of the writings of evangelists and apostles. Nay more :—without affirming the absolute identity of the Jewish and Christian churches, we state without fear of contradiction, that these sacred institutions are one in many of their essential features, and exhibit throughout a close and interesting relationship. Not only are the great fundamental principles of religion recognised by these communities respectively ; but both spring from the same covenant, and are subject to statutes framed and promulgated by the divine author of the covenant. More particularly the ancient church was provided with laws regulating admission to its communion ; and it would be strange if the clear understanding of these would afford no assistance in the interpretation of corresponding laws under the Christian dispensation. In other cases of legislation the meaning of a given *act* often derives important light from its predecessors



relating to the same subject; and hence we find lawyers by a retrospective survey carried perhaps through centuries, expounding more lucidly a law which may have been passed in our own day. On such grounds we maintain the superior excellence and utility of our proposed arrangement.

2. The order of procedure which we adopt is countenanced by the most approved method of discussing the mode of baptism. We traverse the literature of ancient Greece for occurrences of the principal term denoting mode, and our extended review meets the approval of all who are competent to form a correct judgment. "Commence with the classics"—is the watchword. We even avail ourselves of certain related terms, the applications of which may shed a ray, however feeble and flickering, on the main topic of inquiry. These investigations are, by universal consent, previous and preparatory to the discussion of mode on the ground of the apostolic commission. Now on a principle evidently analogous, we preface the exposition of the law of admission to the New Testament church with a comprehensive view of the law of admission to the Old Testament church. We may safely appeal to those whose studies have rendered them familiar with the Baptist controversy in both its branches, whether the previous law of church membership may not bear as legitimately on the discovery of the rightful subjects of baptism, as previous ablutions Jewish and Gentile are admitted to do upon the discovery of the scriptural mode of baptism. God established what we may style a patriarchal law of entrance into his church, with

which law the Jewish people were long and intimately acquainted. Among the same people he first promulgated the Christian law of church membership. Under these circumstances, and bearing in mind the analogy of the discussion respecting mode, we assert it to be the duty of the interpreter to prepare for expounding the law of the commission by a review of antecedent legislation on the same subject.

3. Not to multiply particulars, we observe that this course seems to be plainly pointed out in the New Testament itself. Baptist writers accuse us of the inconsistency of deriving from the ancient economy what we define to be a *Christian* ordinance. The charge is a bootless cavil. True indeed we travel back to the Abrahamic covenant as involving principles and privileges identical with those which distinguish the new dispensation. But are we not taught to do so by the apostle, Gal. iii. 17, when he declares that covenant to have been *confirmed of God in Christ*, four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the Mosaic law? Is not the same lesson inculcated by the solemn assurance, Gal. iii. 8, that the author of salvation “preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed?” If therefore the father of the faithful had the gospel preached to him, and if the dispensation established with him was essentially evangelical, or even if it presents broad features of resemblance to Christianity, we have a strong reason for discussing the patriarchal law of membership preparatory to the exposition of the Christian law of membership.

This view supplies a definitive answer to the ques-

tion which Campbell of America, and other Baptists put with characteristic confidence in its power to puzzle their opponents. There was a church in the world at least two thousand years before Abraham; and the question is, why does not the Pædobaptist go back to that primeval church for the law of infant membership? Why stop with Abraham? Our reason is that the New Testament directs us to the covenant with Abraham, as laying the foundation of the Christian church. Had the same authority pointed us to an elder federal transaction similarly related to the gospel, we should have cheerfully inquired into the character of that more venerable ancestor of our common Christianity. But as our inspired guide has been pleased to conduct us simply to the Abrahamic covenant, we must be content with a less antiquarian original than our opponents suggest; while it shall be our endeavour to make amends for the comparatively recent date of this covenant by showing the completeness of its provisions in their bearing on the principle of admission into the Christian church.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### INFANTS INCLUDED IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, IN CONNECTION WITH TEMPORAL GOOD, SECURED BY THE FEDERAL ARRANGEMENT WITH ABRAHAM.—PROMINENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN THE HISTÓRICAL DISCLOSURE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT.—CIRCUMCISION, AS ITS SIGN AND SEAL, INTIMATELY RELATED TO THE HIGHER INTERESTS AND OBJECTS OF THE ANCIENT ECONOMY.—INFANT CHILDREN OF NONE BUT CHURCH MEMBERS RECOGNISED AS PROPER SUBJECTS OF THIS RITE.—CONNECTION OF PARENTS WITH THEIR *INFANT* CHILDREN.—INITIATION INTO THE ANCIENT CHURCH PERFORMED BY AFFIXING THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT.

I. IN addition to the national or civil advantages secured to the seed of Abraham by the covenant of their great ancestor, that beneficent arrangement comprehended also spiritual blessings. The promises which compose the substance of the Abrahamic covenant, traced in the order observed in the *seventeenth* chapter of Genesis, we find to be the following:—1. A numerous posterity (*v.* 2), restricted federally to the line of Isaac (*v.* 19). 2. An intimate relationship to God, conveyed in the cheering declaration, “I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,” (*v.* 7). 3. “All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession,” (*v.* 8). That temporal blessings of great value are guaranteed in this transaction cannot be called in question;—it is our pre-



sent business to unfold the spiritual treasures with which it teems for the descendants of Abraham, and for the church of God till the end of the world.

The provisions of this covenant embrace spiritual good not merely in symbol but in substance, as may be successfully argued from the terms in which God introduced it to the patriarch, and from its intrinsic character. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham, (*v.* 1,) and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect." Does not this verse solemnly and forcibly inculcate on Abraham a life of holy obedience? Even the more jejune and unspiritual interpreters of Scripture, such as Rosenmüller whose main strength lies in a cold literary exposition, regard the command to "walk before God," as enjoining such a devoted life as Enoch lived upon the earth, *Gen.* v. 22: while Ainsworth says expressly, "This walking comprehendeth both true faith, and careful obedience to God's commandments." By thus inculcating on Abraham a holy and upright deportment, does not the Lord intimate in terms not to be mistaken, that this course alone would be consistent with the revealed spirituality of covenant obligation? But let us inquire whether the body of this federal transaction is not in complete harmony with its divine introduction. "Walk before me and be thou perfect." *v.* 2, "And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." The argument derives strength from the close relation between the covenant and its introductory precept;—the exemplary religious conduct which God demanded of Abraham, being by

implication enjoined on his numerous posterity. In vv. 7 and 8, we find still more direct and decisive testimony.—“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, *to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . . and I will be their God.*” In these verses Jehovah announces as the very essence of this precious covenant, that he would be the God of Abraham and of his seed. Such words are indubitably pregnant with spiritual meaning.

Dr. Carson thinks this promise has a letter and a spirit, and that it “was fulfilled in the letter by his (God’s) protection of Israel in Egypt,—his deliverance of them from bondage,—his taking them into covenant at Sinai,—and all his subsequent dealings with them in their generations, till they were cast off by their rejection of Christ.”—p. 214. But this is to evade, instead of manfully encountering and removing the difficulty. The protection, the deliverance, and the other dealings to which he refers, may have respected Israel merely in their *civil* capacity; and as the Sinaitic covenant is often expounded by Baptists on the same narrow political principle, Dr. Carson’s fulfilment of this promise in the letter appears discreetly to avoid the recognition of the existence of the ancient church. Yet it is upon the constitution and membership of that church under the immediate superintendence of the Author of the covenant, that the argument for infant baptism is entirely founded. As the God of Abraham and of his seed, the Lord organized the church of the fathers, appointed her officers and ordinances, enacted her laws, and arranged

all her solemnities of religious worship. Was there nothing spiritual in all this—are we to resolve it all into the secularities of Dr. Carson’s *literal* fulfilment? Not solicitous, however, about a mere name, we take our stand upon the solid fact that this promise of the covenant, in its *religious* aspect was repeatedly urged upon his ancient people by God himself, as an incentive to holy obedience. How often does this federal engagement show itself, with an unquestionably spiritual import, in the code which heaven framed for the guidance of the visible church, “the church in the wilderness?” How often do we read, as in Lev. xviii. 4, “Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: *I am the Lord your God?*”—xix. 3, 4, “Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my Sabbaths: *I am the Lord your God.* Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: *I am the Lord your God.*” Nay in the case of the restored captives the same rich promise is coupled (Jer. xxiv. 7,) with the *gift of an heart to know the Lord*, and with the cordial return of an apostate people to their covenant God. Thus it appears incontestably that in the history of the tribes of Israel, *the church visible* realized in the fulfilment of *this promise* something better and more nourishing than the husks provided in the *letter* of Dr. Carson. His account of its spirit we hold to be in one respect still more objectionable; but it will meet us at another turn of the argument. It is worthy of remark that even Rosenmüller, with all his *literal* and earthly propensities, regards this assurance to Abraham and his seed, as

implying, "*not only* that the divine Being would be *worshipped* by them, but also that he would distinguish them from other nations by peculiar tokens of goodness." To this learned commentator, the *spiritual* import of the promise appears too obvious to be challenged; while he is concerned to demonstrate that temporal benefits are likewise included.

II. The rite of circumcision as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant sustained an intimate relation to the spiritual blessings, which were accessible within the pale of the ancient church.

The true nature of Abraham's church will probably be best understood by studying the spiritual relations of the token of Abraham's covenant. We have seen that El-Shaddai federally pledged himself to be a God to Abraham and to his seed. This constituted an essential, and indeed the most momentous promise of the Abrahamic covenant; and that it involved spiritual blessings is manifest from the terms employed, and the connections in which the promise is found in the inspired volume. Now we admit that circumcision was a token of the covenant regarded as securing certain civil rights; but we feel bound to contend for the more important fact that it sustained a similar relation to the covenant regarded as securing sacred interests. By the same covenant Abraham and his descendants acquired a right to Canaan as their inheritance, and an interest in Jehovah as their God, both privileges being ratified by the common seal of circumcision.

It may be objected that in the case of multitudes of Abraham's posterity, this observance was attended with



no spiritual efficacy whatever, and that therefore the seal and significance of the covenant issued in no beneficial result. But is not the objection equally valid with reference to the possession of the earthly Canaan? In the Israelites who took their departure from Egypt we witness the circumcised seed of Abrahàm ; yet because of unbelief “their carcases fell in the wilderness.” The mere token of the covenant betrays admitted inadequacy to secure either temporal or spiritual blessings : nay the very promises of which the covenant consists impose obligations the faithful discharge of which is indispensable to the enjoyment of its rich and generous provisions.

It is a grand mistake to assert, as some have done, that mere flesh—natural descent—when circumcision was superadded, formed an unchallenged title to the membership, and even qualified for the sacerdotal office, in the Old Testament church. The assertion may impose on the ill-informed, but to subject it to scrutiny is to achieve its exposure. It is true indeed that for both objects, circumcision was absolutely essential ; but it is equally true that in regard to all the higher interests contemplated in the Abrahamic covenant, and embodied in the Mosaic institute, unbelief and consequent disobedience converted circumcision into uncircumcision. On this central point we differ radically from the views of Dr. Carson, which are palpably erroneous. “The Scribes, and Pharisees and Sadducees,” says he, “with the whole unbelieving body of the Jewish nation, enjoyed all the ordinances of the Jewish dispensation, by as valid a title as the apostles of Christ. . . . The ministrations of the priests were never objected to ; because

they were carnal men, and rejected the Messiah when he manifested himself to Israel." Again—"Jewish ordinances shadowed good things to come, and were appointed for the nation in general, which had only a typical holiness."—p. 229. These statements derive their plausibility from a sophism of too common occurrence, and they do gross injustice to the character of the ancient economy. When Dr. Carson speaks of the title of unbelieving Jews to God's ordinances, he betrays want of discrimination. The Jews had *a valid title* to the ordinances, *as Jews*; but *as unbelievers* they had *none*. This distinction is founded, and it stands out prominently through the whole history of God's ancient people. In the wilderness the Israelites *as such* had a title to divine protection; but *as unbelievers* the wrath of God waxed hot against them, and consumed them by thousands. See Ps. lxxviii. 21, 22; comp. Numb. xi. 1—3. The case was the same in the days of our Saviour. Through the forbearance of God, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, were not yet driven from ordinances which multitudes of them criminally abused. But that forbearance was no proof of the validity of their title in the sight of that God whose mercy to their fathers had so often procrastinated the hour of retributive visitation. And when the Lord eventually cast them away as a people, was it because the genealogical title had failed—was it because they no longer possessed the flesh, and bones, and blood of Abraham? No, "because of UNBELIEF they were broken off."—Rom. xi. 20.

"But," says Dr. Carson, "the ministrations of the

priests were never objected to; because they were carnal men." If the writer intended us to draw from the silence of our Saviour an inference favourable to the lawfulness of the ministrations of a carnal priesthood as such, he has sadly overshot the mark. As well might we conclude that these Jewish priests were men of excellent character, on the ground that Jesus never denounces them as a class, or thunders against them the words of woe which fell upon the Scribes, Pharisees, and Lawyers. But as regards the general question, we contend that the discharge of its offices by carnal men was not the use, but the abuse of the Jewish priesthood. Hophni and Phinehas were carnal men in the priests' office, and for their carnality God slew them with the sword of the Philistines. Nadab and Abihu were carnal men, who, probably under the influence of intoxication, offered strange fire before the Lord; and by fire from God—meet punishment—they were consumed. On the latter occasion, the Holy One laid down this great religious principle, "I will be *sanctified* in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified," Lev. x. 3,—a principle which strikes forcibly against the idea of allowed carnality in the ancient priesthood, the duties of which combined with divine instruction and warning, to inculcate on those who discharged them the necessity of personal holiness.

Dr. Carson speaks of the nation in general as having "*only* a typical holiness." This we consider to be the *πρωτον ψευδος* of the system which labours to carnalize the Mosaic dispensation. A typical holiness no doubt belonged to the church and nation of Israel; and a

typical holiness some consider also to belong to the Christian church. But it cannot be asserted with truth of either, that it has *only* a typical holiness; nor was it merely or even chiefly in this view, that God designated Israel a *holy people*. On the contrary he enjoined real personal holiness—a life of obedience to God, in accordance with their federal engagements—as the only proper and secure basis of this honourable designation. “*If ye will obey my voice indeed,*” said Jehovah to the tribes of Jacob, “*and keep my covenant,* then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.—*And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an HOLY NATION.*” Ex. xix. 5, 6. Is there nothing but type here? With these words before us, is it practicable to eliminate spirituality from the ancient church? On this point, to which it will be requisite to advert hereafter, there is less difference than many writers imagine between Judaism and the religion of Christ. Both embrace the spirit and power of godliness, though in different degrees of development, and such was the state of religious disclosure and obligation even in the former, that the *faithless* observance of God’s ordinances by priesthood\* or people was *not innocent*, however it might pass with impunity.

The relations which circumcision sustained to this spiritual element may be discovered by considering the

\* See *The Typology of Scripture*, Mosaic Period, by the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn;—a work of solid merit, and largely combining the learned research of Germany, with the vital and bible-reverencing evangelism of Scotland and Ulster. In the *third* chapter, pp. 315—356, on the *Priests and Levites*, Mr. Fairbairn, among other



rite, as it presented an emblem of moral purity, and involved a corresponding responsibility.—

1. As an emblem of purity it requires little elucidation. Circumcision, whatever may have been its origin, was not confined to the seed of Abraham. It existed in various nations, and among the Egyptian priesthood, it appears to have been universal. Herodotus, Diodorus, Philo, and Strabo attest its observance in Egypt; and Herodotus extends it to the Ethiopians. It is a striking fact that of the nations remaining in Canaan, the Philistines alone are spoken of in Scripture as uncircumcised. In regard to Egypt, modern investigation has confirmed the evidence of history; while the rite was confessedly symbolic of moral purity.

Our chief concern is, however, with circumcision, as it formed the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and the symbol of religious purity under the ancient economy. To Israel, it has been said, belonged the circumcision of the flesh, for which has been substituted among Christians the circumcision of the heart. This is doubtless a summary method of divesting the sign of the covenant of all pretensions to spirituality; but happily it derives no countenance from the sacred records. Paul, it is true, addresses the Colossians (ii. 11,) “as circumcised with the circumcision made without hands:” but it is equally true that the Jewish church was not unacquainted

propositions of great value and interest, has proved by the clear evidence of Scripture, that the holiness enjoined on the Levitical priesthood “was an excellence which however it might be symbolized by outward things, could not possibly be formed of these, but must have been a real and personal distinction.”

with the spiritual, or heart circumcision.\* On the great fact that God had chosen Israel as his peculiar people, Moses founds the exhortation, Deut. x. 16, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." The same truth is still more strikingly exhibited in Deut. xxx. 6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." From such passages we learn that "the circumcision made without hands,"—the removal of spiritual defilement,—instead of constituting an exclusive privilege of the Christian church, was also realized under the Mosaic dispensation; and hence Dr. Carson contradicts the testimony of Scripture when he asserts that "the circumcision of Christ came in the room of the circumcision of Moses." On the contrary, the preceding testimonies demonstrate that the circumcision of Christ may be truly said to have coexisted with the circumcision of Moses. Both dispensations possessed, though in different measures, the same spiritual cleansing; and in both an external rite was the appointed symbol of inward purity. Dr. Carson states very properly that "circumcision, and baptism correspond in meaning. They both relate to the removal of sin, the one by cutting, the other by washing." Now it is possible that the one external rite may have come in the room of the other; but to make the circumcision of Christ the successor of the circumcision of Moses, is to fall into manifest absurdity. The spiritual cleansing

\* See *Winer's Realwörterbuch*, sub voce *Beschneidung*, and *Note*.

figured by the circumcision of Christ is an essential feature common to both dispensations: and, therefore, it can not, in any proper sense, be said to have succeeded in the room of the circumcision of Moses.

2. The party undergoing circumcision was thereby brought under a solemn engagement to live in the fear and service of God. We admit that circumcision was not a seal of personal righteousness to any except Abraham; but we maintain that all who received it were thereby pledged to personal righteousness. When a divine ordinance, symbolizing spiritual purification, is administered to man, it powerfully enjoins on him by the language of action to “keep himself unspotted from the world.” By no chemistry can the ordinance be disengaged from this weighty obligation. The apostle (Gal. v. 3,) assures us that “every man that is circumcised *is a debtor to do the whole law.*” His argument indeed contemplates mainly the ritual department of Judaism; but the principle which his assertion necessarily recognises implies a higher obedience. Is the circumcised person a debtor to do the whole law? His obedience must not only be active and universal;—it must also exhibit the combination of inward principle with outward performance. Compliance with law-requirement on lower terms would be unworthy of the name of obedience, the observance of the rites of the law being neither profitable nor innocent apart from the fulfilling of its righteousness.

The responsibility imposed by circumcision, whether limited or universal, enables us to dispose of a great argument brought against infant baptism. Infants, it

is said, are incapable of entering into a contract, or coming under obligation, because they are not accountable agents. But this boasted principle is not of boundless application in the ethics either of common life, or of theology. The statement of the apostle teaches us that the circumcised person was a debtor to do the whole law; and we know that the rite was almost universally administered in infancy. As the obligation was strictly coextensive with the ordinance, none were exempted from its bond; and thus at the very threshold of the ancient church, infancy and responsibility met together. *There* the little one of eight days became a debtor to keep the covenant, and to do the whole law of God;—a fact which should be seriously pondered by those who reject infant baptism on the ground of its supposed incompetency to entail obligation. Whatever may be alleged on other grounds against the baptism of infants, no man can endorse this objection, without discarding a principle affirmed by the God of truth in reference to the former rite of initiation. If the *circumcised infant* was thereby a debtor to do the whole law of Moses; why may not the *baptized infant* be a debtor to do the whole law of Christ?

III. The federal transaction with Abraham recognised the infant children of none but parties within the covenant, or church members, as proper subjects of circumcision. It would be worse than useless to waste time and labour in vindicating the right of infants to the initiatory seal of the Patriarchal or Mosaic economy. On this point there exists no room for argument, inasmuch as the circumcision of infants is provided for in



the very basis and constitution of God's ancient church. Our proposition, however, instead of putting forward this ecclesiastical truism, limits the application of the federal symbol to those who composed the membership of the Old Testament church. To authenticate this limitation, by showing that it rests on the solid framework of Scripture testimony, is our present business, and though the enterprise is attended with difficulties, chiefly of controversial growth, we hope to conduct it to a satisfactory issue.

As the ancient church theoretically comprised all the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob, it is self-evident that within this range the circumcised infants were the children of church members. So far therefore as Israelites were concerned, the pale of church membership constituted the scriptural and impassable barrier of circumcision. This important fact holds equally, whether we place the circumcision of the child on the ground of its parent's connection with the covenanted church, or trace its claim in unbroken descent from the *remote ancestor*, Abraham. The *remote* bond of relationship indeed, and the *immediate*, in such cases necessarily imply each other; and both appear to us to concur in linking infant circumcision to parental church membership. But it has been alleged that whether the parents were church members or not, their children of the seed of Abraham, had an inalienable right to this ordinance. This view which is commended by no inconsiderable amount of ability and argument, is in our judgment obnoxious to fatal objections. Whatever importance may attach to lineal descent from Abraham,

we cannot detect in it the broad universal principle on which infants were initiated in the church of the covenant. Let us put it to the test. The Ishmaelites, Edomites, and others "had Abraham to their father;" yet could their offspring claim neither part nor lot in "the congregation of the Lord." Though the seed of Abraham, their extraction could not obtain for them access to the provisions of Abraham's covenant. Here, therefore, the principle of genealogy is not the principle of admission to church membership. Again, there were children in whose veins flowed not one drop of the patriarch's blood, yet were they admitted to circumcision and to all the privileges of the covenanted people. In this case also the genealogical principle fails to render an account of infant circumcision. This principle is, in fact, both too broad, and too narrow for combining the induction of facts. It would introduce within the precincts of the covenant multitudes who are found to be excluded; and it would shut out from the same sacred inclosure numbers whom a covenant God admitted to federal privileges. It finds room for the wandering sons of Ishmael, but has not a corner for Gentile proselytes and their children.

The view which we consider to be based on Scripture, and commensurate with the facts is, that as God included in the covenant, *certain* of the descendants of Abraham, and arranged for throwing open its provisions to proselytes of the Gentiles, the children of both classes sustaining the same relation to its initiatory seal, this ordinance in its religious aspect, belonged properly to the church of God, whether its members were of Jewish

or Gentile extraction, and never possessed divine sanction for wandering a hair's breadth beyond this prescribed boundary. As a religious institution, the seal of the covenant and the symbol of moral purity, circumcision was confined exclusively to the church; and the infant seed of her members, whether derived from Abraham or not, were regarded as within the covenant, and therefore to be circumcised.

The genealogical relations of the covenant with Abraham are differently conceived of by Dr. Halley. "Every descendant of Abraham," he observes, "was born with an incipient interest in this evangelical covenant, and was related to the Messiah according to the flesh, inasmuch as he was related to the progenitor of that promised seed."—p. 536. Is this wide statement borne out by the testimony of Scripture? When God, in answer to Abraham's prayer, predicted the national greatness of Ishmael, he instantly subjoined, Gen. xvii. 21, "*But my covenant will I establish with Isaac.*" How this language is to be reconciled with the notion that the posterity of Ishmael were born with an incipient interest in the covenant, we confess our inability to understand. That "the son of the bondwoman," in common with the other males of Abraham's household, was circumcised, is unquestionable; but from the chartered privileges of the covenant his descendants are obviously excluded by the implicit declaration of the God of Abraham.

Another limit somewhat analogous meets us in the rejection of Esau. This rejection we cannot attribute to the Mosaic economy; for in the arrangements of the

Head of the covenant, we find it not obscurely anticipated and sanctioned hundreds of years before Moses was born. Gen. xv. contains a prediction that *the seed of Abraham* ("thy seed") should be *a stranger in a land not theirs*, under bondage and affliction four hundred years, and that in the fourth generation they should enter the land of Canaan. The exclusive application of this prophecy to the Israelites cannot be challenged; and hence the specified seed—may we not say the promised seed?—of Abraham does not include the Edomites. This testimony in its plain meaning falls in most naturally with the contemplated casting off of this section of Abraham's descendants, and its force taken in connection with the renewal of the great Abrahamic promises to Jacob may be considered irresistible. In the vision exhibited to the latter patriarch on his way to Padan-aram, Gen. xxviii. 14, the voice of God assured him in the very terms formerly addressed to "the father of the faithful," that *in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. These words embrace a farther development of the principle of restriction, which was exemplified in the establishment of God's covenant with Isaac, and they clearly imply that the rejection of Esau was no afterthought,—no Mosaic arrangement. The point does not seem to require lengthened discussion. In the Abrahamic covenant God himself laid the foundation of the Jewish church, proportioning its breadth to the intended superstructure, and presenting throughout the perfection of mutual fitness and symmetry. It was manifestly not his design to render the membership of that church coextensive with the natural posterity of Abraham.



The restriction which marked the process of founding the church upon the covenant was sovereign, but not arbitrary; and it subserved a gracious design. In the original call of Abraham out of an idolatrous world, we trace the effective combination of the principle of selection with the element of spirituality. The same plan was carried out in the establishment of the covenant with Isaac to the tacit rejection of Ishmael, and in the renewal of the Abrahamic promises to Jacob, while Esau, a "fornicator and profane person" was excluded. Very instructive is the position thus assigned to the Ishmaelites and Edomites. It furnishes conclusive evidence that mere "flesh and blood,"—unbroken lineal descent from Abraham,—could not of itself command access to the federal blessings of the ancient dispensation.

It may be objected, however, that from the days of Jacob the restrictive principle became dormant, and that we are thenceforward to recognise the *earthly tie* as the sole ground of covenant church membership. We cannot see that God abandoned the principle, though the mode of its application was altered. Divine judgments performed the work of restriction and promoted the interests of spirituality. Should Israel fall away to idolatry, destruction was their doom; while love and obedience to the Lord their God were inseparably connected with the permanent possession of the inheritance which he had promised to their fathers, "to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," Deut. xxx. 17, 18, 20. In other passages, the threatenings come down with terrible point and particularity. Against man, woman, family or tribe, that should turn to other gods, was the

denunciation thundered, that God would blot out their names from under heaven, and that their land should be converted into brimstone and salt and burning, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath. See Deut. xxix. 10—29. Nay, more than once was the whole nation threatened with excision *on account of their rebellion against God*, while he promised to make of Moses “a nation greater and mightier than they.”

These were no idle threats on the page of the federal statute-book. In the defection to Baalpeor, Num. xxxv. 9, twenty-four thousand Israelites were cut off. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram with all their adherents, Num. xvi. 31—35, died by an awful visitation. The covetousness of Achan involved the ignominious sacrifice of his life, and the ruin of his house. But it is unnecessary to prosecute the history of Israel's sins, and Israel's punishments. Neither rank, nor official dignity, nor multitude could command exemption. The prophet who abused the heavenly gift often answered with his life; the priest who profaned the holy place bled at the altar of offended purity; pestilence struck down, or the sword devoured the tens of thousands whose numbers encouraged them to forsake the worship and defy the right hand of the God of Abraham. True indeed, divine forbearance was often wonderfully signalized; yet in tracing to their principle the judgments inflicted on Israel, and marking the *restriction* which these judgments effected, and the testimony they bore to the importance of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, we are strengthened in the conviction that mere “flesh and blood” did not

constitute a valid title to the blessings of the Abrahamic or Mosaic covenant.

Whether the plan pursued in the rejection of Ishmael and Esau, was allowed no place under the Mosaic economy, as calculated to augment the mass of surrounding heathenism, we have no data enabling us to determine ; but as a matter of fact, in cases of aggravated guilt death appears to have supplied the place of final rejection, and this judgment obviously acted as a limit on the subjects of circumcision, and of all religious ordinances.

On the covenant relation of children to their parents, Dr. Halley says, “ A father might by unbelief cut himself off from the people, incur the forfeiture of his privileges, but he could not, by that act, prevent his child from claiming restoration as a son of Abraham : but *if the forfeiture was not hereditary, neither was the privilege.* . . . In ascertaining the covenant relation of the children, the character of the immediate parents was never taken into the account.”—p. 537, 538. I am not sure that I fully apprehend the author’s meaning in this citation, or the exact *covenant position* of the father who “ might have *cut himself off* from his people and incurred the *forfeiture of his privileges.*” Is this self-excision, this forfeiture to be understood as placing its unhappy victim outside the boundaries of the Abrahamic covenant, and so completely annihilating his federal standing and privileges as to identify him in all respects with the Gentile world, and render the identification fixed and final ? We put the question upon this ground, because a less complete forfeiture and cutting off might leave the immediate parent in such a lingering relation

to the covenant as would secure the admission of his son. An Israelite, for instance, incurs the charge of unbelief, forfeits his privileges, and is in some sense cut off from his people ; still his position is not that of a Gentile,—he is still a wandering, a lost sheep of the house of Israel,—one in whom the federal link is impaired but not broken. Now Dr. Halley's conclusion respecting the son has no warrant, unless the excision of the father is such as to denude him of all covenant relationship to God, and bring down his standing to the common level of heathenism. It is only by striking the names of the immediate parents out of the covenant, by thoroughly gentilizing their religious position, that Abraham can have the undivided honour of introducing their infant seed to church membership by the door of circumcision. Where this species of rejection occurred, as we believe to have been the case with Ishmael and Esau, descent from Abraham failed to obtain for their offspring a place among the covenanted people ; where the cutting off and forfeiture were less complete, the influence of the federal relation of the immediate parent in procuring the admission of his son cannot be disproved ; and even where Abrahamic origin was neither possessed nor pretended, as in the case of Jewish proselytes, the children were entitled to the initiatory rite on the ground of the covenant standing of their parents.

When Dr. Halley affirms that “in ascertaining the covenanted relation of the children, the *character* of the immediate parents was never taken into the account,” his statement does not come up to the point. Had he asserted that “in ascertaining the covenanted relation



of the children, *the covenanted relation* of their immediate parents *was never taken into the account*," the assertion would have been to the purpose, but its correctness would have been open to challenge, as we have already endeavoured to show. In every case of application on behalf of an infant for the covenant seal, as it appears to us, the claim would have been made good by evidence of the *covenanted relationship* of the immediate parents, as it would have been completely invalidated by evidence of the contrary. We thus reach the important conclusion, that the infant son of a church member, or one in covenant relation,—be that member, Israelite, proselyte, or bond-servant,—was thereby entitled to circumcision; and that this ordinance therefore, as the seal of the covenant, belonged exclusively to the heritage of God, comprising Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, together with such Gentile proselytes as joined themselves unto the Lord in the great congregation.

The compulsory submission of the Edomites to the rite of circumcision as the result of their subjugation by Hircanus (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiii. 9) we deem it unnecessary to discuss. Dr. Halley cites it, in connection with Jer. ix. 25, 26, in proof that Abraham's descendants were admissible to circumcision, though the rite may have been disused for generations. The testimony from Jeremiah, we may state, is of very doubtful meaning, (See Kénaan, Von Lengerke, s. 245, and Turner's Comp. to Gen. p. 261,) and the conversion and circumcision of the Edomites, instead of reviving a dormant claim, or affording evidence of federal relation to Abraham, appear to us simply as melancholy illustrations of the policy of

a grasping statesman, combined with the ferocity of a victorious warrior. Their descent from Abraham may possibly have given a colour to the ambitious project of Hircanus ; but even of this not a syllable is breathed by the Jewish historian. From such an example, I at least can learn nothing with respect to the scriptural subjects of circumcision.

We bring our observations on this head to a close by noticing the covenant relation between parents and their *infant* children. That this was the specific relation contemplated in the Abrahamic covenant is evinced by several weighty considerations. "He that is *eight* days old," said the great Lawgiver, Gen. xvii. 12, "shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations." Is it objected that Abraham was circumcised at the age of ninety-nine years, Ishmael at thirteen, and many members of the household doubtless in mature life? These cases, we reply, occurred of necessity at the origin of the institution ; but the standing law for all future generations enjoined the circumcision of children in a state of infancy.

The term זָכָר rendered *man-child*, we admit denotes a male, whether infant or adult ; but, in the passage cited, its connection with the *eighth day* forms a restriction not to be mistaken. The same term, it is true, is repeated in v. 14, without distinct allusion to the period of infancy, though Dr. Boothroyd on the combined authority of the *Samaritan*, and *Septuagint*, has inserted that allusion in his *Translation*. As a various reading it is respectably supported, and its existence indicates that from a very early date, the limitation expressed in v. 12, was sup-

posed to be implied in *v.* 14. The proposed alteration, however, we are not inclined to regard as at all requisite to the conclusiveness of our argument for the special federal connection between parents and their infant children. Addressing Abraham, (*v.* 12,) and Moses (Lev. xii. 3,) the God of the church explicitly appointed the eighth day for the circumcision of his people throughout their generations. A law so simple in its nature, and couched in such intelligible language, is incapable of elucidation. The lawgiver might, of course, have specified the eighth as the *earliest* day for administering the rite, leaving it optional with parents to select any *later* period which might suit their wishes or their convenience. But he has not done so. By patriarchal and Mosaic statute-law, circumcision is bound to the eighth day, and in ordinary cases the Scriptures make no provision whatever for deferring its administration. Under both forms of the ancient economy, the enactment did not mention the eighth day *and onwards*, but simply *the eighth day* as the fixed time for the dedication of a Hebrew male to the God of Abraham.

There were exceptions indeed—instances of criminal or unavoidable neglect with which the proper authorities had to deal according to the directions of the Legislator, or their own discretion. But neither the existence, nor even the frequency of such cases could alter, much less repeal, the primeval law of eighth day circumcision. Were confirmation of this view necessary, it could be supplied by the entire history of the Jewish church from her birth until now. The practice of Israel for thousands of years, founded on primordial law, brings to this insti-

tute a venerable attestation. Even the sanctity of the Sabbath must not interfere with the observance of this ordinance; for in the judgment of the Rabbinical doctors, —Circumcisio tollit Sabbatum,—“The rest of the Sabbath must give place to the rite of circumcision.” See John vii. 22, 23. On these and similar grounds, we hold that the Abrahamic covenant recognises a peculiar relation between the people of God and their *infant* children, in virtue of which relation it was the duty and privilege of covenanted parents under the old economy to have the seal of circumcision applied to every male of their family on the eighth day.\* By sovereign federal engagement was this privilege secured to the infant children of church members, both Jews and proselytes, while the offspring of those who were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise,” were of necessity left to the uncovenanted mercies of Jehovah.

#### IV. As the sign and seal of the covenant, circumcision

\* The universal neglect of circumcision during the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness has called forth various explanations. Heeren in his *Ideen*, Part iv. p. 19, suggests that, in such circumstances, the observance of the rite may have been considered prejudicial to health. To this Hengstenberg, replies:—“Had the author entered into the import of circumcision—its relation to the covenant—which rendered impossible its participation by a race rejected and cast back upon the world, he would have left to Le Clerc and others of the same stamp this very superficial ground of explanation.”—*Authentic des Pentateuches*, Erster Band, S. 62, Proleg. Also *Translation by the Continental Society*, vol. i. p. 50. This weighty sentiment of Hengstenberg, it will be observed, is strongly in favour of the principle of joint restriction and spirituality which we have shown to characterize the economy of the patriarchs and of Moses.



constituted in the strictest sense, the initiatory ordinance of the ancient church. The truth of this proposition admits of easy and complete demonstration. Among the Israelites, the *stranger who joined himself to the Lord*, the proselyte (*προσήλυτος*) of the Septuagint, Ex. xii. 48; Lev. xvii. 8, and of the New Testament, Acts ii. 10; vi. 5, was undoubtedly admitted to church membership by the rite of circumcision. That other observances of later origin were imposed on the neophyte, is manifest from the history of Jewish proselytism; but we are assured on the authority of Scripture, that no external rite, except circumcision, was essential to his joining with Israel in the solemnity of the Lord's passover. Here is the law on the subject. Ex. xii. 48, "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof."

That this law introduces circumcision as an *initiatory* ordinance our opponents cannot deny; but they strive to evade the force of the argument by alleging that the passover possessed no *religious* character, being *merely* a great national festival commemorative of the signal deliverance from bondage in Egypt. How this allegation is to be reconciled with the views of the passover observance so impressively presented in Scripture we are at a loss even to imagine. In Deut. xvi. 2, we find this injunction,—“Thou shalt, therefore, *sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God*, of the flock, and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name

there.” Are we to understand that a mere civil observance, a national rejoicing, is styled a sacrifice to the Lord, or that the same designation is applied to the slaughtering of meat for a public repast? Again, when we learn from 2 Chron. xxx. 18—20, that in keeping the passover under good king Hezekiah, the people *prepared their hearts to seek God, the LORD God of their fathers*, the exercise appears to us to fall in with the idea of a religious solemnity, while we cannot reconcile it with a mere civil institution.

We know the staple objection, that every Israelite, without regard to religious character, on simply submitting to circumcision, was entitled by law to partake of the passover. But the answer is obvious. Though God’s people realized in the seal of the covenant a *legal* title to approach him in the passover, and other religious ordinances, yet “the preparation of the heart” was indispensable to the right and profitable enjoyment of the privileges secured by that title. To join in the passover solemnity, or in any other ordinance of religion, on the strength of lineal descent, or federal circumcision, regardless of the state of the heart before God, was to trample on things most sacred, and negative the design of institutions divinely appointed. Of the correctness of these statements, the first chapter of Isaiah furnishes ample and tremendous confirmation.

The state of the case now seems to be transparent. There is no access to the passover, and the other sacred observances growing out of the Abrahamic dispensation, except by the door of circumcision; and every man to whom that rite *as the seal of the covenant* has been

administered is *ceremonially* qualified to keep the pass-over, and observe generally the ordinances appropriate to church membership. But this state of things presents no bar to the *necessity* of other and higher qualifications, whether implied in the religious observances themselves, or imposed by separate and superadded requirements on the part of the great Lawgiver.

In these views our opponents cannot be expected to acquiesce. "Circumcision," says Campbell of America, "was not the door into any church. It was no initiatory rite to any moral institution." That the strength of these assertions is in the inverse ratio of the proof offered by their author, will be manifest to every intelligent and impartial reader of the "Lexington Debate." Here is the evidence condensed by himself, and appended to his propositions, "The Ishmaelites, and Edomites, and many other nations by Keturah, were circumcised. Into what church did they enter? The Jews were members of the politico-ecclesiastico church by natural birth. Circumcision was no initiatory rite or door to them."—Suppose this veteran polemic could produce a thousand instances of nations practising circumcision, without regarding it as initiatory to church membership, he would not thereby invest his argument with one shred of convincing power. Israel *may* have been *so* introduced, though the whole world\* beside had practised the rite apart from all idea of ecclesiastical initiation. Mr. Campbell does not appear to understand the position of the Ishmaelites and Edomites. These tribes,

\* See Tuch über die Genesis, p. 343.

as we have shown, were divinely separated from the *federal* seed of Abraham; hence the rite of circumcision as practised by them, must have been, in a great measure, stripped of its *federal* significance. Why did circumcision introduce the sons of Ishmael and Edom to no church? Simply because they were not of the people with whom a God of grace and sovereignty had *established his covenant*. The difference between circumcision *within*, and circumcision *without* the provisions of the covenant, is patent and incontestable. A heathen priest, who may have observed the rite as part of his own system, was not thereby admissible to the covenant privileges of God's ancient people; but had he submitted to it as a proselyte to the faith of Abraham, it would have opened the door of church fellowship.

The author further affirms that the Jews were members of their national church "by natural birth," or, as Dr. Carson says, were born into it, and that therefore circumcision could be no initiatory door to them. We meet this assertion with an unqualified negative. Speaking of circumcision, Dr. Palfrey states part of the truth, when he says,—“Without it no one could be, either by *birth* or adoption, a Jewish citizen.”\* As this is a point of vital moment, we must endeavour to settle definitively which side is sustained by the evidence of Scripture. An Israelite was entitled, by natural birth, to the seal of the covenant, and he thus entered the ancient church by a door, which exhibited an impressive emblem of the necessity of spiritual cleansing. Suppose,

\* *Academical Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures*, vol. i. p. 202.



however, this rite to have been neglected, what then was his position, according to the terms of the covenant? Destitute of the seal appended to that solemn engagement, could he mingle unchallenged in the religious services of the people who were “not reckoned among the nations?” If these blessings numbered among the fruits of natural birth, if the Jew *was born into* “the politico-ecclesiastico church,” how are we to account for the fact that without circumcision, he dare not offer unto the Lord the sacrifice of the passover, or take any part in that great solemnity? But why discuss the privileges civil or sacred of an uncircumcised Hebrew—of one whom the voice of the Abrahamic covenant consigned to utter excision? “He is, by birth, a member of the church,” says Campbell. “What saith the Scripture?” The only privilege which the God of the covenant has federally extended to the *uncircumcised*, is that “he shall be cut off from his people.” Mere birth, therefore, only placed the Israelite within the range of an awful judicial sentence; while circumcision, as a merciful door of escape, introduced him ritually to all the blessings which flowed in the channel of a divine and gracious institution.

The fact of initiation by the covenant seal being thus established, we may add a word respecting its character. Circumcision we hold to have been introductory to a certain religious state, and we cannot therefore sympathize with the views of those who degrade it to the level of a merely carnal observance, destitute of moral efficacy, as well as personal saving application. Dr. Carson has done injustice to the spiritual character of this rite, by mis-

apprehending the conditions on which it was administered, and losing sight of its own intrinsic significance. On the law (Ex. xii. 48,) he thus annotates;—"Here there is no faith required in the person who desires to eat the passover, nor in his adult males, whether children or slaves, who are to be circumcised as the condition of his eating the passover. The circumcision of his whole family takes place as a matter of course. There is then *no law that requires even a profession of faith in the God of Israel, in order to entitle a stranger to eat the passover.* There is no condition of either faith or character; and had he a thousand unbelieving children and slaves, he has a divine warrant to circumcise them."—p. 228. On this comment, we observe—

1. That the law referred to by Dr. Carson speaks of "*keeping the passover to JEHOVAH,*"—a form of expression which manifestly denotes a religious observance,—while he betrays a uniform, if not intentional, preference for the phrase, "*eating the passover.*" The latter expression no doubt often occurs in Scripture; but it is interesting to notice that when the Spirit of God lays down the law for the admission of strangers, Ex. xii. 48, Num. ix. 14, he is careful to connect the ordinance with the great name of Jehovah. "*Keep the passover unto the Lord.*" Its religious character, we are aware, is not suspended on the terms in which it may be described; still the language of comment should not even *seem* to evade the spirituality of the text.

2. We deny that neither faith, nor profession of faith was required in order to entitle a stranger to keep the passover. The law indeed prescribes the ceremonial

qualification alike for Israel and the stranger ; but the *ordinance itself* required a spiritual qualification. This distinction can produce Scripture warrant. In the days of Hezekiah, the people were *circumcised*—they possessed a ceremonial title to the passover ; but besides, they were required to *prepare their hearts* to seek God in that solemn ordinance. Was this heart-preparation will-worship ? No, the nature of the observance demanded it, and it met divine approval. In like manner, those who joined the returned captives (Ezra vi. 21,) in keeping the passover, were “such as had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land to seek the Lord God of Israel.” In this case also the parties felt, and felt truly, that the moral demands of a passover *kept unto the Lord*, could not be met without religious preparation. Now as the Israelite and the stranger were under the same law, and as the Israelite learned from that law the necessity of preparing his heart for God in the service of the passover, and as that preparation was signally owned of the Lord, it follows undeniably, that a bare ritual observance could not qualify, and was not designed to qualify, the stranger for drawing near to God in the same commemorative institution. In fact, the law implies the spiritual qualification, while it imposes a tolerably sharp test of the sincerity of the candidate. Besides the circumcised stranger in common with his fellow-worshippers of Israel, was a *debtor to do the whole law*, and that, in case of disobedience, he exposed himself to its righteous penalties, is established by the uniform testimony of Scripture.

3. The relation between the stranger and the males

of his family is unfairly or defectively exhibited by Dr. Carson. It lies on the face of the regulation, that unless all the male children were circumcised, the parent was not admissible to the passover. But this does not imply that he had "a divine warrant" to circumcise them unconditionally, or a divine warrant to circumcise them at all. The stranger received no command from God on the subject, nor did the law bind him to any particular course. It simply pledged the Israelites not to admit him to the passover, until all his males were circumcised; but as it neither recognised nor created any necessity for his admission, it could not have invested him with authority to force the rite on a reluctant or rebellious adult. The law was in effect for the authorities of the church, and it left the stranger to proceed with the circumcision of the males of his family, according to his own discretion. On a principle somewhat analogous, we contend against the necessity of compulsion in administering the rite to Abraham's household. Nay we affirm compulsion to have been physically impossible. The head of the family could not have administered the rite by force to several hundred of adults. Besides, had any of them refused, or considered Abraham's proposal cruel or preposterous, they could have gone into exile, as Hagar did, when her mistress dealt hardly with her. We do not maintain that all the members possessed true faith, such a regard for the authority of *El-Shaddai* as prompted voluntary submission, being all that the nature of the case imperatively demanded. So much is to my mind plainly implied in Gen. xvii. 27, comp. xviii. 19, the latter containing a noble prophetic testimony to the



righteous deportment of the parties whom Abraham circumcised. "I know him," said Jehovah, "that he will command his children and his household after him, *and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment*; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

That circumcision, then, introduced its subjects into a divinely organized religious community rests on the plain unsophisticated sense of Scripture; and that the infant offspring of parents who were members of that community, were legitimate subjects of this initiatory rite, is sustained by the same divine testimony.

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

### INFANTS IN THE CHURCH TILL CHRIST'S COMING.

SCRIPTURE RECOGNITION OF INFANTS AS A COMPONENT PART OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE ANCIENT ECONOMY.—THEIR TITLE EQUALLY VALID WITH THAT OF ABRAHAM AND MOSES.—CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE RELATION IN WHICH THEY STOOD TO THE SAVING PROMISES OF THE COVENANT.—CONTINUANCE OF INFANTS IN THE CHURCH FROM ITS FOUNDATION TILL THE FULNESS OF TIME.—THE COVENANT STANDING OF FEMALES CONSIDERED.—INDIRECT INFLUENCE OF CIRCUMCISION IN SECURING THEIR FEDERAL PRIVILEGES.—OBJECTION FROM EZRA IX. X. AND NEH. XIII. 13, ANSWERED.—GENERAL BEARING OF THE LAW OF ADMISSION INTO “THE CHURCH OF THE FATHERS” ON THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE ANALOGOUS LAW UNDER THE *NEW COVENANT*.

WE have pointed to circumcision as the door of admission into the ancient church, and among those who were privileged to enter by that door, we have discovered an interesting class composed of the infant children of the covenant. Can we trace their presence within the ancient Zion, and was their abode there permanent?

I. The Scriptures emphatically recognise little children, circumcised infants, as forming a component part of the Old Testament church. We find, for instance, that “the church in the wilderness” consisted of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children.

A similar specification, but more minute, and therefore more to our purpose, is furnished in connection with the renewal of the church's covenant engagements, before the death of Moses. In strains of fervid and dignified pathos, that man of God, on the border of Canaan and of eternity, thus addressed the congregated tribes:—"Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is within thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, *and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*"—Deut. xxix. 10—13. We solicit attention to the composition of the assembly which at this period entered into covenant with God. The captains, elders, and officers were all there,—the wives, and strangers or proselytes formed part of the vast congregation. Were the *children* excluded? No. One of the most interesting classes presented on that solemn day before the Lord, consisted of the *little ones* who were expressly comprehended in the terms of the covenant, and therefore reached by its solemn obligations. These little ones belonged to "the kingdom of heaven." Their title to a place in the covenant, and in God's sanctuary was as valid as that of Abraham or Moses. But it will be objected that the band of little ones was probably made

up both of males and females. So much the better eventually for our argument, inasmuch as the cause we plead, is strengthened by the presence of female children in the church, though we should be ignorant of the door by which they entered. For passages enjoining the appearance of all the males before God thrice every year, see Ex. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16, and xxx. 12, 13.

The recognition of infant membership distinguishes the entire cast and complexion of the ancient church. An opponent disposed to quibble might indeed challenge some of the common proof-passages as not explicitly naming infants in the enumeration of the different classes of God's people; but when the men, the women, and the children are specified without the slightest hint of limitation, we have no more right to understand the children as *only a part* of the children, than we have to understand the men and women as *only a part* of the men and women. Besides, the quibble would be unavailing, as infants, *sucklings*, are expressly mentioned among God's covenanted people. See Joel ii. 16, 17.

But while the position of infants within the church is unassailable, it is a point of some difficulty, as well as interest, to ascertain the precise relation which they sustained to the revealed economy of mercy. When God announced his gracious design to establish the covenant with Isaac, it was explicitly understood that the child of promise should receive the federal seal on the eighth day, and that the observance should be maintained by his descendants throughout their generations. What then was the exact character of the relation thus divinely constituted between the church and the *infant*



seed of her members? What benefit did the little ones derive from their covenant position? Dr. Carson contends "that the infants even of Abraham himself, were not saved, when they died in infancy, by Abraham's covenant." This assertion he endeavours to substantiate by showing that the patriarch "was not the spiritual father of his own infant seed;"—that "he was the spiritual father of none among his descendants but such as believed;"—and that the covenant constituted "no spiritual connection," and in fact "no new relation" whatever "between him and his infant seed."—p. 217. But suppose no spiritual relation subsisted between Abraham and his infant children, it does not follow that they were not saved by Abraham's covenant. The patriarch and his infant son may have each shared the common salvation provided by the covenant, without conveying the idea of spiritual paternity and filiation. If the Abrahamic covenant made no provision except for believers, its utter inadequacy to save an infant dying in infancy would be obvious to the most superficial reader of Scripture. But the basis of the covenant is not so narrow as Dr. Carson, in his acute though inconclusive reasonings, has unwarrantably assumed. As an essential element in this covenant, the Lord promised *to be a God to Abraham and to his seed after him*. The *spirit* of this promise the author confines to *believers alone*, contrary to the obvious meaning of the words, and unsupported by any adequate authority. Was the promise, in its spiritual import, inapplicable to the dying infant? Did it preclude the Lord from being the God of the dying infant? Nay, it pledged him to

be the God of the dying infant. When Jehovah says, "I will be a God to thy seed," we cannot question the competency of such a federal engagement to save a dying infant. We presume not to limit its author in regard to the means of accomplishing the salvation; but we are prepared to maintain that the dying infant on whose behalf this promise is spiritually fulfilled is a saved infant,—and we can discover no obstacle in the way of such spiritual fulfilment.

Dr. Carson says the infant dying in infancy is saved "through the *bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman*." The truth of this statement we cordially acknowledge, but it offers no explanation; for believers themselves are saved by the same great sacrifice. Christ's sufferings are as essential to the salvation of the adult, as to that of the infant. But the question is, *how* are these sufferings practically available? The adult realizes a beneficial interest in them through *faith*; the same interest is secured to the infant in a way which we do not profess fully to understand;—but whatever may be the agency, it does not lie beyond the range of the promise—"I will be a God to thy seed."

Not unmindful of the case of infants dying in infancy, the Abrahamic covenant also made interesting provision for those little ones, whose season of life was prolonged amid the perils and privileges of the church militant. Having entered by the door of circumcision, the "man-child" escaped the judgment of being "cut off from his people," and became incorporated with the nation whom God had chosen for his inheritance. As growing intelligence fitted him for appreciating the ordinances of the

church, he found them easily accessible. He could join in the celebration of the passover, and in other festivals and solemnities illustrative of the covenant faithfulness of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A thousand sweet and sacred memories were ready to burst upon his heart, charged with precious influences. His religious position enabled him to take a commanding view of the successive monuments which Jehovah had erected to the glory of his own name, and by the contemplation of which the devotion of his people might acquire depth and earnestness, and heavenly enlightenment.—Still we admit that all these appliances could not secure salvation; and all we maintain is that the seal of the covenant connected the infant seed of church members with the Lord's heritage by a bond which gave them free access to the privileges of the ancient economy, under circumstances happily calculated to impress the youthful mind, and draw the heart's first love to "God the God of Israel."

II. The relation subsisting between parents and their infant children, as sanctioned by the Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic institute, having continued in full force from the patriarchs till the apostolic commission, must exert considerable influence upon the right understanding and interpretation of that important document.

That *infant* circumcision, which Jost regards as the distinguishing mark of *Judaism*, was maintained by the ancient church through all the vicissitudes of her history, and that the observance survived in unimpaired vigour at the opening of the Christian dispensation, must be admitted by all who know their Bibles. The instances

of John the Baptist, and of our blessed Saviour abundantly attest the prevalent practice till the very close of the Jewish economy. Even at a later period, when the apostles had already entered on their honourable career, we find indubitable testimony to the circumcision of infants as a Jewish ordinance, the neglect or contempt of which was deemed highly culpable. Thus the charge against Paul, Acts xxi. 21, was that he taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles, “to forsake Moses, saying that they *ought not to circumcise their children*, neither to walk after the customs.” It is also in evidence, that during the same period, the male children of proselytes to Judaism were circumcised together with their fathers, after the manner of Abraham’s household, and by that rite admitted to the privileges of the covenant. So far as Rabbinical literature illustrates this point, much information will be found in Lightfoot’s *Hor. Heb.* on Mat. iii. 6; Wall’s *History of Infant Baptism*, i. pp. 14, 26; Ainsworth and Rosenmüller on Ex. xii. 48; Winer’s *Realwörterbuch*, Art. *Beschneidung*; and Matthies’ *Bapt. Expos.* pp. 18, 19.

We have now before us three important facts:—1. That throughout the patriarchal and Mosaic institution till the commencement of Christianity itself, circumcision formed the door of admission to the church of God, both for Jews and proselytes. 2. That the male infants of both classes, in accordance with the standing law of the Abrahamic covenant, were circumcised on the eighth day. 3. That when parents of whatever name or extraction, were found in connection with the church, or came forward to join themselves to its membership,



their male children were associated with them in the same solemn federal relation.

But, demands the Baptist, "by what door did females enter the church of the Old Testament?" The puzzle merits attention, not so much for its own sake, as because it directs our thoughts to the general subject of the comparative church standing of females under the two dispensations. From various intimations scattered over the Hebrew Scriptures, it appears that the wives and daughters of church members were for the most part entitled to federal privileges in common with their husbands and fathers. Attendance at the *three* great religious festivals seems to have formed an exception. Yet in regard to these solemnities, all that can be correctly affirmed is, that the males were required to act a more prominent and public part, while several of the observances affected the people at large, without distinction of sex. It is also well known that, besides the sacrifices and other sacred rites appointed for females, they are introduced by name as entering into covenant with God, Deut. xxix. 11; and incidentally referred to as assembling at the tabernacle of the congregation, 1 Sam. ii. 22.

Now, in reply to the question, we assert that females were absolutely indebted to the federal seal for their admission into the church, though that seal was personally inapplicable to them. Dr. Carson thinks, circumcision "was not enjoined, nor ever explained as a privilege to individuals." Females, he says, "enjoyed every spiritual privilege equally with the males; and the want of circumcision did not deprive them even of

any temporal privilege. . . . It is true, indeed, that Paul says that there was much profit in circumcision. Rom. iii. 1, 2. But it is evident that *this includes females, and* refers to Israel as the circumcised nation.” —p. 230. The value of circumcision as a covenant privilege, far from being disproved or even damaged, is eminently enhanced, by the religious position of Jewish females. We agree with the author that “they enjoyed every spiritual privilege equally with the males:”—but why? Simply because they formed a part of Israel “as the circumcised nation.” Had they been the wives and daughters of the uncircumcised, their access to the “spiritual privileges” of Judaism would have been barred, and the enjoyment of many of its temporal blessings impracticable. Dr. Carson may deny that circumcision was a privilege to individuals; but, as he admits that it saved its subject from death, that may be considered some little benefit; and we have shown that *it introduced the individual* to important religious privileges. Besides, how could it confer “much profit” on a people, without benefitting individuals?

“It was rather a privilege to females,” Dr. Carson asserts, “to be freed from this painful rite.” No doubt it was, so long as their exemption did not involve the forfeiture of a beneficial interest in the covenant of which circumcision was the token. But could they enjoy such interest without personally submitting to the ordinance with which the privilege was connected? The negative involves the principle that the benefit of a religious rite is necessarily confined to the parties to whom the rite is administered. Is the student of the

ancient economy, or of any economy, prepared to adopt this principle? In particular, would not its application invalidate the doctrine of the apostle respecting the great "profit" of circumcision to the Jewish people at large, including both males and females?

But Dr. Carson farther affirms that "Circumcision is here (Rom. iii. 1,) taken for the whole legal dispensation to which it was attached." To this interpretation we demur as inconsistent with the context, and wholly inadmissible. At the close of the former chapter, (vv. 25—27,) Paul clearly distinguishes circumcision as a rite, from the law, or economy, to which it was attached. "*Circumcision*," says he, "verily profiteth, if thou keep the *law*." This distinction is not lost sight of for a moment through the entire context. Why then have recourse to a different application at the beginning of the *third* chapter? We can see no reason, except that the plain meaning recognises the great value and efficacy of the seal of the Abrahamic covenant. The sense is clear as the light. "What advantage," inquires the apostle, "hath *the Jew*?" referring to the *sum total* of his privileges;—"and what benefit is there in *circumcision*?"—the rite which introduces to these privileges. See Stuart and Fritzsche on the text. We are gratified to find Mr. Haldane, the friend and admirer of Dr. Carson, in his excellent *Commentary on Romans*, assigning to the term circumcision its own specific application. He thus paraphrases the verse.—"If the preceding doctrine be true, it may be asked, what advantage hath the Jew over the Gentile, and what profit is there in circumcision, if it *does not save from sin*?" Were it

necessary, we could adduce in support of our interpretation, many of the first names in biblical exegesis, and show the opposite view to be chiefly current among looser and less critical commentators; but we may safely forbear.

The result thus obtained brings before us a great symbolic rite, administered exclusively to males, yet affirmed by the apostle to be profitable to the Jewish people universally, including females. From the ordinance of circumcision the whole nation derived benefits, males being indebted to it directly, and females indirectly, for the relation they sustained to the covenanted church. It was in virtue of this intimate relation, that the people, without distinction of sex, had access to the oracles of God, and reaped "much profit every way" from the arrangements of the ancient economy. We are aware that intermarriage with the sons of Israel did not secure to the "strange wives" referred to in Ezra ix., x.; and Neh. xiii. 23, an interest in "the congregation of those that had been carried away." But the objection is scarcely plausible. For these alliances were in direct violation of God's law, Ex. xxxiv. 16, and a divine institution cannot be expected to sanctify the contravention of a divine precept. Against the parties denounced by Ezra and Nehemiah, the sentence of condemnation had gone forth as incorrigible and inveterate idolaters. Far different would have been the course, had the inquiry respected females, not indeed of Jewish genealogy, but disposed from their habits and views to fall in with the worship of the true God. This is evident both from the reason assigned for the prohibition in Exodus, and also from Ezra ix. 1, in which the for-



bidden connection is charged with involving Israel in the "abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites." The avowed object of the law and the discipline being to guard against the snares of idolatry, the apparent exception goes in reality to strengthen the evidence in support of what we have designated the indirect influence of circumcision.

We are now prepared, in some measure, to estimate the just influence of the principle of admission to the ancient church upon the right understanding and interpretation of the apostolic commission. Into that church infants were admitted from the days of Abraham till the death of Christ. From Abraham to Christ, no case occurs of parents joined to the Lord in covenant, and their children as such excluded from that sacred relation. As a set-off against the federal position of children, Baptist writers are accustomed to urge the divine warrant for circumcising servants, and in fact all the males of the household. But the cases, we conceive, are not exactly parallel. We do not assert that the seed of Abraham had a more essential interest in the covenant, though its chief promise seems to have been confined to them. Nor do we look upon the relation which bond-servants sustained to the spiritual privileges of the covenant as a mere effort to guard its citadel against the insidious approaches of idolatry. But we cannot help viewing their membership as an occasional affair—less settled and continuous through different ages, than that of the regular children of the covenant, and therefore not equally calculated to produce the conviction of a

permanent right. All will probably admit that any change affecting them would not have entered so vitally into the state of the ancient church, as an analogous change affecting the children of Israel; and that the case of infants would influence most decidedly the understanding and interpretation of the commission, will not be generally contested. Still these are not the grounds on which we meet the objection. Our doctrine is that the New Testament modifies that part of the ancient economy, which relates to the admission of the adult members of a household. None will question the right of the author of Christianity to modify the previous system; and it will be our business to prove, as has to some extent been attempted, that the actual modifications leave infant membership intact, while they require of all adults, bond and free, male and female, a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Even on the latter point we do not regard the procedure of the new economy as at all departing from the great principles of the old;—but rather as carrying out those principles with increased strictness and efficiency. Each appears to us to reveal and inculcate, though with unequal clearness of manifestation, and distinctness of *personal* enforcement, the fundamental truth that “without faith, it is impossible to please God: for *he that cometh to God* must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

The character of the argument for Pædobaptism, drawn from the Abrahamic covenant, we are solicitous to free from all obscurity. We do not contend for the necessity of admitting the child of a Christian by baptism to the

membership of God's church now, simply *because* the child of a Jew was admitted of old to analogous privileges by circumcision. On the contrary, we have stated our conviction that it was perfectly competent to the Head of Zion to alter the terms of admission, and change the subjects of the initiatory rite under different dispensations. Still farther we grant that the *express* repeal of the former law was not indispensable in order to introduce and sanction an ecclesiastical procedure at variance with its accredited requirements. Had God, for example, contemplated the exclusion of children from the Christian economy, in opposition to the former law patriarchal and Mosaic, the design could have been doubtless accomplished by a formal repealing enactment. The same object, however, might have been attained by distinctly requiring of *all* intrants into the Christian church such qualifications as do not and cannot belong to infancy. So far as man is concerned, the only condition we deem morally essential to the supposed alteration, is that the new law of church membership, by which the old is to be displaced, be couched in terms of obvious plainness—distinct, intelligible, free from ambiguity. Its nature as a law, and the peculiar circumstances in which it is to come into operation, concur in imposing this condition as at once reasonable and imperative. Far from rejecting the terms thus propounded, the Baptist, we presume, will readily undertake to maintain that they are realized in the apostolic commission, and generally in the new covenant; and it is our business to demonstrate the invalidity of the reasonings by which he labours to establish that conclusion.

That a people accustomed for ages to the admission of infants by divine enactment, would require a clear authoritative declaration from God to effect so great a change in the constitution and membership of the church, is surely not an unreasonable proposition. Whether the old law is to be set aside by repeal or substitution, the regulation enforcing a new procedure, addressed as it is to those whose feelings, convictions, and prejudices were all enlisted on behalf of ancient practice, should be expressed, if possible, more luminously than even the law of circumcision. The reason is manifest. That new regulation interferes with an ordinance venerable for antiquity, instituted\* by the God of Abraham, and imbedded in the heart of a nation notorious for clinging to the ritual observances which had travelled down to them from a distinguished and hoary ancestry. On the other hand should the evangelical records be found to contain no statute of repeal, no plain substitute for the ancient law, no principle necessarily involving its sub-

\* Dr. Carson thinks "that to place the grounds of infant baptism on the Abrahamic covenant, is to make intelligent obedience impossible to most Christians."—p. 235. The reader will observe that the *grounds* on which we place infant baptism do not correspond with this statement. But the objection itself is exceedingly frivolous. To place the grounds of believer baptism on Mark xvi. 16, is to make intelligent obedience impossible to most Christians. For the passage is disputed by Griesbach and others, and probably not one Christian in a thousand may have the means of satisfying himself by sufficient evidence, that it forms part of the word of God. The same objection may be applied to the intelligent reception of the Bible at large. May we not also assert that to place the grounds of immersion on the sense of βαπτίζω in Greek literature, is to make intelligent obedience impossible to most Christians?



version ;—still more should they present traces of the patriarchal and Mosaic practice of receiving little ones into the church, and most of all, should they employ baptism to do the work of circumcision, wear its costume, and stand in its relations, we entertain a settled conviction that they would inevitably lend the sanction of inspired authority to the cause of Pædobaptism.

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

### INFANTS NOT EXCLUDED BY THE NEW COVENANT.

IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE *RANGE* AND *LIMITS* OF THE NEW COVENANT.—INFANTS, ACCORDING TO DR. CARSON, NOT INTERESTED IN ITS PROVISIONS.—STATEMENT OF HIS ARGUMENT, WITH A DETAILED REFUTATION, EMBRACING A COMPARISON OF THE OLD COVENANT WITH THE NEW,—AN EXAMINATION OF THE TERMS OF THE LATTER,—AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE RELATIONS IT SUSTAINS TO CHRIST AS ITS MEDIATOR.—THE FEDERAL STANDING OF INFANTS UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION IN OBVIOUS ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE.—SAVING PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE UNDER EACH SUCCESSIVE ECONOMY NOT COMMENSURATE WITH ITS ADMINISTRATIVE EXTENSION.—DR. CARSON'S ATTEMPT TO HOLD MILITANT INFANTS UP TO RIDICULE, NEITHER LOGICAL NOR SCRIPTURAL.

HAVING reached the New Covenant, we deem it of the utmost moment to ascertain its range and its limits; for if infants are not comprehended under this covenant,—if its terms sternly exclude them from all federal privileges, the apostolic commission would have no power to sanction their baptism. If infants are not within the range of the covenant, no provision for receiving them can be made by the commission, which forms merely a subordinate, though authoritative arrangement of the covenant. On the other hand, if they are *not* excluded

by the covenant, their interest in the ordinance of baptism is probable and open for discussion.

In Jerem. xxxi. 31—34, the new covenant is predicted, and in Heb. viii. 10, 11, the apostle applies the prediction to the Christian economy. We quote the latter passage.—“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.”—“Here we see,” observes Dr. Carson, “that all who are included in this covenant, have the laws of God put into their mind, and written on their heart, by himself. Can this be said of infants? The subjects of this covenant know the Lord—all of them—even the least of them. This surely cannot include infants, who know nothing. Is there not a necessity to teach children, as soon as they are capable of instruction, to know the Lord? Are any children found who need not this instruction? If not there are no infants in this covenant. The sacrifice of the Son of God was as necessary for infants as for adults. But had it pleased God that all the elect should die in infancy, there would have been no need of the new covenant at all. The Gospel would then never have been preached. To keep in mind this distinction would preserve theologians from many of their embarrassments.”—p. 216.

That this exposition betrays a narrow and erroneous

view of the character and design of the new covenant, we shall endeavour to evince by unexceptionable Scripture testimony.

1. The author's argument for the exclusion of children *would equally shut them out of the old covenant*, in which all admit them to have been included. At the dedication of the *first* covenant, Moses "sprinkled the book and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the Testament (covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 18, 20; Ex. xxiv. 8. He had previously read to them the book of the covenant, and received their solemn assent to its teachings, and their cordial promise of obedience. With one hearty response the assembled tribes exclaimed, Ex. xxiv. 7, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Now it is this very covenant which the passage in Hebrews compares with the new covenant; and Dr. Carson argues for the exclusion of infants from the latter on the ground that they know not the Lord. If the argument is sound, it will equally exclude infants from "the first covenant;" for when Moses had read "the book," the people, in the exercise of intelligence, yielded a voluntary assent, of which infants are confessedly incapable. Were infants then really excluded from the old covenant? Had the seed of Abraham no interest in the Mosaic economy till they arrived at the age of adults? Does not the whole history of their economy promptly answer in the negative? What saith the prophet Joel ii. 15, 16?—"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders,



*gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet."* All these classes, as we learn from *v. 17*, belonged to the heritage of God, and were therefore embraced in the old covenant.—Hence it follows irresistibly that the Lord may address his church as an *understanding* people, without implying the exclusion of infants. He did so address them in countless instances under the ancient economy. It follows also that on this point the mutual agreement of the two covenants is complete, and very instructive.

2. The terms of the new covenant do not necessarily exclude the infant seed of church members. That infants possess not the knowledge of the Lord is a general truth. How far it may hold with respect to infants dying in infancy, it is not for man to determine. Does the infant enter heaven, ignorant of the Lord that bought it? If not, who is presumptuous enough to assert that God has not written on its heart the knowledge of himself, in fulfilment of the promise of the new covenant? This view is not affected by the allegation that children, after the stage of infancy, uniformly require to be instructed in the things of God; for the cases are so essentially dissimilar, that to confound them is to betray utter want of discrimination.

But let us look more closely at the parties interested in that covenant, in which Dr. Carson can find no room for infants. The new covenant, according to Jerem. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 8, is made "*with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,*" including the whole Hebrew nation. Are infants excluded here?

On the contrary does not the language necessarily embrace them, unless indeed we are to understand that the whole nation was composed of adults? It is true, the provisions of this covenant have but partially reached God's ancient people even now, yet we have his express assurance, Rom. xi. 26, that "ALL *Israel* shall be saved." Still, the advocate for restriction appeals to the terms of the covenant itself, as absolutely confining its privileges to adults—persons of whom knowledge and piety are predicated. The objection seems very plausible, without one particle of validity. If the promises which God made and fulfilled to his ancient people, were thoroughly studied, no man would commit himself by patronizing such an objection. In Jerem. xxiv. 7, God says, "I will give them an heart to know me that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Had this text been applied to the Christian dispensation, some would have hailed it as a strong Scripture proof for the exclusion of infants. But the Spirit of God limits it distinctly to the Jewish economy, which admitted infants;—thus showing indisputably that promises of knowledge and other blessings by no means imply the exclusion of infants from covenant privileges. In fact *the terms of the new covenant exhibit no departure from the style of promissory address which Jehovah commonly adopted towards the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.*

In all systems, training and instruction, as a matter of course, belong principally to those who have advanced beyond the period of mere infancy. Thus God said of

Abraham, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Could infants do justice and judgment? Could infants keep the way of the Lord? Are we not entitled to infer that infants formed no part of the household of Abraham? Yet in the face of such reasonings and inferences, infants were manifestly included in Abraham's household, and possessed an inalienable interest in the covenant of Abraham.

In maintaining the federal rights of infants, we would fix especially on the great promise,—which we regret to find omitted in Dr. Carson's version of the new covenant,—"I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Does this standing promise of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Christian economies, exclude infants? Is it impossible, is it strange, is it unscriptural for the Lord to be the God of infants? The Baptist will doubtless say: This promise, as part of a series, belongs only to those, all of whom from the least to the greatest "know the Lord." We answer, it belongs to "the house of Israel," and therefore in common with the other promises of the series, its character must determine the extent of its application. This principle is a leaf out of Dr. Carson's book. Infants, he maintains, have nothing to do with this covenant, because they know not the Lord. Infants, we reply, can never be expelled from this covenant, until it is proved impossible for the Lord to be their God. As a component part of the house of Israel, infants are entitled to the benefit of every covenant promise applicable to their age and circumstances.

3. The revealed relations of the new covenant to Jesus, its mediator, are opposed to the exclusion of infants. The old covenant failed chiefly in imparting to the mind an adequate amount of spiritual instruction, and stamping the hearts of the people generally with abiding impressions of divine things. This defect was naturally brought out in the case of adults. The “better covenant” supplies a remedy; but in so doing, we have no reason to conclude that it disturbs the federal standing of infants. If the defect applied not to them, why interfere with their former privileges?—and if it did apply, would the remedy provided by a *more generous economy* denude them of their ancient covenanted rights? The strong presumption in their favour, is confirmed by correct views of Christ’s mediation of the new covenant.

In Heb. ix. 1—10, we find an account of the leading observances under the first covenant. Gifts and sacrifices, we learn, were offered in the ancient tabernacle; the blood of bulls and of goats was freely shed; and on the great day of atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of holies “not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.” The *eleventh* verse commences a series of spirited contrasts intended to evince the marked superiority of the new covenant. It possesses “a more perfect tabernacle,” in it is offered “blood” which alone can purify the conscience; and the mediator who intercedes at its mercy-seat, has by one sacrifice “perfected for ever those for whom expiation is made.”

This suggests a satisfactory method of determining whether the covenant foretold by Jeremiah, and estab-



lished with the church in "the fulness of time," embraces or excludes the infant seed of her members. The Spirit of God teaches us (Heb. ix. 18,) that "even the first covenant was not ratified without blood,"—thus distinctly assuming that blood was indispensable to the ratification of the second or new covenant. The blood of victims from the herd and flock effected the former purpose; the latter was realized only by the shedding of the blood of Christ. Christ "is the mediator of the new covenant," *v.* 15, and *in this capacity* he appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." *v.* 26. Indeed to deny that he presented his sacrifice, as mediator of the new covenant, would destroy the force and logical coherence of the apostle's entire argument. What is the ground on which he chiefly rests the unapproached superiority of the new covenant? He rests it on the fact, that the blood of Christ its mediator possessed an efficacy of which the former sacrificial system exhibited only types and shadows. If, however, the shedding of Christ's blood formed no part of the mediation of the new covenant, the great value and dignity claimed for that transaction by the apostle would be bereft of all solid foundation. But his reasoning is based on ascertained facts. The old covenant had its sacrifices and its blood of typical expiation;—the new can point to the atoning blood of its mediator as securing for his people real and eternal redemption. Now Christ laid down his life, to use Dr. Carson's own words, "as a ransom for his chosen whether infants or adults;" and as he laid it down in mediation of the new covenant, the conclusion is unavoidable that while that covenant

receives adults into its bosom, it dare not close the door against the admission of infants. Christ, as mediator of the covenant, having shed his blood alike for both, neither adults, nor infants, as a class, can be rightfully excluded from federal standing and privileges.

It may be alleged that the sacrifice of Christ was presented as part of the arrangements of the covenant of redemption,—or eternal compact between the Father and the Son, and not in mediation of the new covenant. But is there ground for the assumption that these two objects are mutually incompatible? When Christ suffered on Calvary, he shed his blood “for many, for the remission of sins;” and by the same act, according to the reasonings of the apostle, ratified the new covenant, as its mediator. Both federal engagements may be therefore said to meet in the death of Christ. By that solemn event, the covenant of redemption is consummated, and a foundation laid for carrying out the extensive and beneficent provisions of the new covenant. Hence the unbroken tie of association in earth and heaven between “Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and *the blood of sprinkling*,” in which infants and adults possess a community of interest. Dr. Carson asserts that the covenant of redemption “will save as many infants as are included in it, and, in a loose sense, the assertion may be allowed to pass. Infants doubtless obtain salvation through the atonement of Christ; but if the regenerating agency of the Spirit upon their hearts is indispensable, their case appears to come within the operation of the new covenant. An infant, no less than an adult, needs spiritual renovation—needs in one word,

the fulfilment of the delightful promise, "I will be thy God;" and though words cannot intimate the blessing, it may yet be realized as a fruit of that economy which places all the redeemed in this happy and exalted relationship. In this view, the new covenant is as essential to the salvation of an infant as to that of an adult; and when Christ, as its mediator, presented his atoning sacrifice, both were included at once in "the finished work," and the efficient application of redemption.

4. The bestowment of covenant blessings, under Christ's mediatorial superintendence evinces the federal standing of the little ones. In one whose predictions have earned for him the appellation of "the evangelical prophet," we witness a public minister of the ancient church, whom the Lord called "from the womb." Isa. xlix. 1. To Jeremiah also (i. 5,) God said, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Whether the sanctification consisted in simply setting him apart as a prophet, or whether it involved the purifying agency of the Holy Spirit, the case exemplifies beyond all controversy, God's covenant regard for infants, unless indeed the call of these illustrious prophets should be numbered among his uncovenanted mercies. More striking still is the promise made to Zacharias respecting the infancy of John the baptist; Luke i. 15, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." We are here upon the very margin of Christianity, with its alleged *infant excluding* covenant; and yet we find federal agency employed upon the *infant* heart of that man whom the Lord raised up to point a

nation's hope to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This gracious visitation too we ascertain to be expressly included in the covenant : for in his rapturous song of thanksgiving Zacharias magnified the faithfulness of God in performing "the mercy promised to our fathers," and remembering "*his holy covenant*,—the oath which he sware to our father Abraham." *vv.* 72, 73.

In the ministry of Christ, as mediator of the new covenant, we are also presented with strong evidence of the federal relation of infants. The people (Luke xviii. 15, 16,) "brought unto him infants, that he would touch them : but when his disciples saw it they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God." We do not here raise the question touching the baptism of these little ones, but we ask, if the new covenant had nothing to do with infants, on what principle could Christ its mediator command them to be brought to him, and pronounce on them the coveted benediction ? Why did he not say to the parents, or other parties, who presented these children—"The covenant of which I am mediator makes provision only for adults, and as these are infants (*βρέφη*), and therefore know not the Lord, they can have no possible interest in its arrangements, or its administration. The rebuke tendered on this occasion by the disciples, appears, on Dr. Carson's theory, proper and righteous. For if infants have no concern with the covenant, parents or guardians had no right to press them on its mediator. But, blessed be God, the part



taken by our Saviour, was different, and it happily demonstrated his affectionate regard for the little ones, and their acknowledged interest in the economy over which he presided. Nor have we yet exhausted the force of this testimony. By his example Christ taught an impressive lesson on the subject of infant relation to the covenant; and lest even this should prove insufficient, he laid down a general principle, which perversity itself can hardly misinterpret.—“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,”—suffer not merely these, but infants generally, all the infants embraced in the comprehensive arrangements of the covenant. The mediator of the covenant says, “suffer the infants to come to me;” the disciples forbid them to be brought. We have, therefore, Christ’s authority for their admission, and that of his ignorant disciples for their exclusion.

The position of children as well as parents within the precincts of the covenant is farther recognised in the admonitions of the apostle, Eph. vi. 1, 4; Col. iii. 20. “Children obey your parents in the Lord. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” In reply to Wardlaw, Dr. Carson observes that “the fathers addressed may not be the fathers of the children addressed; and the children addressed may not be the children of the fathers addressed.” “Children,” he adds, “are to obey their parents in the Lord, even if these parents are infidels; and parents are to train up their children in the nurture of the Lord, though they are not in the church.”—p.

188. Admitting the distinction drawn by the author, we can yet perceive an instructive resemblance between the exhortations of Paul to the Ephesians, and those of Moses to the Israelites. "Keep thy soul diligently," Deut. iv. 9, was the address to the covenant people of old, "lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons." The analogy is obvious, and intimate.

Without however pressing the inference, we pass at once to the vital point on which we apprehend we are at issue with Dr. Carson. When the apostle urges Christian parents to train up their children in the nurture of the Lord, the question instantly arises, Are the children whom God has put under this training to be regarded as *within* the new covenant, or dispensation? Dr. Carson is decided in upholding the negative, we are equally so in standing by the affirmative of the question. The obscurity resting on this point may perhaps be cleared away by attending to the distinction between *the extent* of God's covenant in its saving provisions, and in its sanctioned administration.

Under every revealed economy, the covenant of grace, or everlasting covenant, has been brought to bear more or less widely and successfully on the spiritual condition of man. It was this covenant, "confirmed of God in Christ," which *El-Shaddai* disclosed to Abraham "four hundred and thirty years" before the giving of the law. Apart from its earthly blessings, which were of an adventitious character, this divine arrangement comprehended all who were God's people under the Abrahamic

dispensation. Regarded as a covenant of eternal life and salvation, it did and could embrace none but the *true* Israel of God ; yet in its administrative capacity, it opened its arms to receive the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob, to all of whom it held out privileges and blessings peculiar to a state of covenanted relationship. As a covenant of grace and mercy everlasting, God's chosen ones were its exclusive subjects ; but as a covenant affording external privilege and opportunity under circumstances admirably calculated to impress and improve, its provisions reached multitudes, of whose spiritual state the judgment of charity itself might well despair. No change, in this respect, attended the incorporation of the covenant with the Mosaic system. On all who were trained up under the ritual of Judaism, in federal relationship to God, faith and obedience were inculcated by the most touching motives, and with a measure of success. Hence the apostle could point out in the ancient economy, a constellation of believing worthies, as witnesses to the fact that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Yet the administrator of the covenant did not interpret its spirituality to the exclusion of the infant seed of the church, nor even in many instances to the excision of those whose unbelief morally disqualified them for religious fellowship with the God of Abraham. They were not all Israel who were of Israel ;—"the election of grace" was more limited than the covenanted membership of the Jewish church.

But it will be affirmed that this discriminative principle is inapplicable to the Christian dispensation. Let us inquire into the testimony of Scripture, and the facts

of experience. The new covenant, so far as it bodies forth the everlasting covenant, can include none but the heirs of grace and salvation. Is this description exemplified in the entire visible church, or in any of its sections? We have so much confidence in the honesty of Christendom, as to believe that no religious community, Baptist or Pædobaptist, entertains the wild thought, that its members universally share the heavenly adoption, and are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ in glory." Speaking of his own sect of Baptists, Dr. Campbell, of America, expresses the sad conviction, that "*not a tithe of the baptized can enter the kingdom of heaven.*" A similar acknowledgment, though differing, perhaps in numerical proportion, might doubtless emanate from any of the churches, even those most distinguished for evangelical faith, and apostolic order. It may, then, be submitted as a practical fact, which none can gainsay, that the new covenant, in an important sense, does not include all the members of the new covenant church; or, in other words, that the range of administration, as under the old economy, is wider than the saving provisions of the covenant.

How shall we dispose of this fact? Will it serve the purpose to maintain that the new covenant was intended to embrace the faithful people of all communions, who constitute Christ's invisible church in the world? But this view is objectionable on several grounds. It implies that the federal arrangement which the apostle has exhibited as the glory of Christianity, sustains a common relationship to all ages and economies. For under every form of revealed mercy, God has written his laws in the



hearts of his people, and he has been their God. We have a still weightier objection. The covenant requires for its development some public visible constitution. Under no circumstances has it appeared as a system of pure spiritualism, unconnected with external means and agencies. This is as true of Christianity now, as it was, in former times, of Judaism or Patriarchism. In the gospel visible church with its constitution, laws, ordinances, officers, and all its arrangements, we trace the practical working out of the new covenant. But the covenant appears to provide for the heart religion of all its subjects, and truth forbids us to claim this character for the universal membership of the visible church. According to some, the difficulty is removed by considering that faith is required for admission to the church, and that therefore, were it not for hypocrisy and other forms of evil, the spiritual provisions of the covenant would be fully realized in the church. The lameness of this explanation, however, is only matched by the confidence with which it is offered. Surely the promises of the covenant are not conditioned, but absolute:—if then we are to look for their literal fulfilment in the Christian church, that community must be composed solely of God's redeemed people. It is vain to speak of hypocrisy or other hinderances. Had the God of Zion intended to identify the visible church with the true subjects of the covenant of grace, his wisdom could have devised measures for carrying out that intention to the letter. That he has not done so is evident from the history and present state of the best ordered churches, and still more from the record of the first age of Chris-

tianity. The place of Judas in Christ's own family, and of Simon Magus in the apostolic church, fixes an impassable gulf between the necessity of an interest in the saving provisions of the covenant, and admission to the membership of the Christian church. It will be said that in these cases, there was a credible profession. Just so; and it must come to this whether we take our estimate from the age of Paul, or Athanasius, of Calvin, or Whitfield. The profession of faith by an adult, attended with various degrees of evidence, has uniformly secured admission to the church; while true and saving faith alone could obtain a standing within the precincts of "the everlasting covenant" under all economies. The Christian church, therefore, or the administration of the new covenant, has a *necessary*, and we take leave to add, a *sanctioned* latitude which does not belong to the covenant of grace absolutely considered.

The question which appears still to press for solution is, Have we any legitimate means of reconciling the *practice* with the *law*—the organized system with the divine platform? Do the verses (Heb. viii. 8—10,) demand, or admit of an interpretation, by which harmony may be restored and the church of the New Testament shown to correspond with its heavenly model? "The writer," says Stuart on the passage, "does not mean that religious instruction will be altogether *superseded*, when the happy period arrives of which he speaks; but that, inasmuch as the laws of God will be *infix'd upon* the hearts of his people and engraven upon their minds, none will be ignorant, as in former times, of his true character and the requirements of his law. *The words*

*are not to be urged to a literal explanation.* The meaning of the whole plainly is, that the knowledge of true religion, or of God, should become universal under the *new covenant*, so that no one might be found who could properly be addressed as knowing nothing of the true God."

If this exposition is sound and develops the true spirit of the Gospel covenant, the difficulty is removed. Some may consider the writer chargeable with misrepresenting the sense of the original, by passing under a generic form what the Spirit of God intended to be personal and specific. Had Stuart justified his views by any established principle, or governing fact of Scripture interpretation, no room would have been afforded for the objection; but as this has not been attempted, it is necessary for us to glance at the character and filling up of prophetic delineations. When Jeremiah, xxxii. 37—40, announced God's gracious purpose to bring back the captivity of Judah, he presented a brilliant sketch of the religious state of the people on their return to Jerusalem. "I will give them one heart," said Jehovah, "and one way that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, . . . and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." These words conveyed the assurance of a signal reformation of religion, and were calculated to awaken in the captives cheering conceptions of the blessings which awaited their restoration. Nor did the reality blight their hopes, though it might have been justly taxed with falling short of a literal

accomplishment. The bright scenery associated with the same event, as pourtrayed by Ezekiel, xi. 17—20, corresponds in all its broad lineaments and rich colouring with the representation of Jeremiah, while the minuter shades betray certain natural diversities. The return of the captivity marked a great epoch in the revival of the ancient church. The idols were utterly abolished, and a covenant God became the undivided object of the people's homage. Unanimity to a happy extent distinguished their counsels and procedure as they assembled once more in their beloved fatherland. Guided by the word and will of Jehovah, all classes heartily co-operated in rearing the tabernacle of David which had fallen down, and peopling the wastes of Jerusalem with joy and benediction. But it would be contrary alike to the design of the writers, and the nature of such compositions to force a prophetic theme the loftiest and the loveliest into the pitiful channel of small detail, or narrow-minded punctiliousness. What should be thought of the intellectual calibre, or moral rectitude of the critic, who would strip Jeremiah and Ezekiel of all inspired sagacity, because, forsooth, he could point out sundry exceptions to the religious spirit which possessed and pervaded the returned captivity?

The principle thus elicited sustains Stuart's view of the new covenant, as practically embodied in the Christian dispensation. We rest on a firm basis. We have the analogy of similar predictions by Jeremiah collated with their recorded fulfilment,—we have the important fact that the apostle identifies this covenant with the visible Christian church under the mediatorial superin-



tendence of its Head,—and, from the days of the apostles until now, we have evidence of a church membership not composed exclusively of true believers. From the analogy we learn, among other instructive lessons, that Jeremiah's prophecy respecting the Christian church no more excludes children from its membership, than Jeremiah's prophecy respecting the returned captives excluded the same class from the church of the Mosaic economy. If there is to be exclusion, it must rest upon some other authority than the sublime and comprehensive terms of the new covenant.

The admonitions to parents and children in the churches of Ephesus and Colosse will now be more clearly intelligible. When the apostle enjoins children to obey their parents *in the Lord*, the injunction, according to Dr. Carson, is addressed to believers, and for proof he appeals to the limiting influence of the apostolic commission. This course we do not condemn; while we shall show in its proper place, that the appeal is not sustained. Meantime we point triumphantly to the admonitions themselves as containing nothing congenial to the principle of restriction insisted on by their interpreter. Obedience in the Lord is inculcated upon children, just as Abraham, or Moses, or Nehemiah would have inculcated the same duty; and the precept is urged home by quoting the analogous command which pealed upon the families of Israel from Sinai's frowning summit. The limit of the Baptist is not in the language,—it is not in the context,—it is not in the new covenant,—and it is repugnant to the sense which an unsophisticated mind Jewish or Gentile would naturally derive from the

sacred text. That Dr. Carson felt the necessity of some controlling principle borrowed from another quarter, to conform the passage fully to his exposition, is evinced by his appeal to the commission; and hence should the appeal prove unsuccessful, our views will receive strong corroboration from the acknowledgment by the apostles of parents and children in the churches to which they addressed their epistles.

We witness a sweet painting from the hand of the beloved disciple, 1 John i. 14, in which *fathers, young men, and little children* form a delightful Christian group, under the vigilant and affectionate eye of apostolic inspection. All the parties are interested in the “better covenant.” The little children are not indeed too young to “know the Father;” but they are not apparently old enough to rank as adults. Their connection with the church of the Lord Jesus must have commenced at a very early period; for they are still *little children*, though they *have known* the Father. Paul says to Timothy,—“*From a child* (ἀπὸ βρέφους *from an infant*) thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.” Timothy was trained up by pious parents in a church which enjoyed the privilege of infant membership; and the account of John’s “little children” seems to present a case of lovely parallelism. These examples of a piety which may be almost styled *infant*, occurring as the old covenant was resigning its sceptre to the new, impressively exhibit in the practical operation of both, the precious Abrahamic promise,—“I will be a God unto thee, *and to thy seed.*”

We close this part of our notice of infant relationship to the new covenant by animadverting on the futile effort of Dr. Carson to pour ridicule on the subject, and fright opponents "from their propriety" by a thunder storm of hard words. Mocking the complaints of Pædobaptists, and particularly of Dr. Williams,—a man of talent, erudition, and piety,—respecting the exclusion of infants from "the church militant," he thus pours forth a tide of angry invective.—"*Militant infants!* What an idea! Might we not as well attempt to cure bedlam with syllogisms, as reason with persons who speak of believing militant infants? If any general should talk of raising an army of infants to oppose an invading enemy, he would at once be deemed insane, and his sovereign would not one moment longer intrust him to command—no, not though he were the duke of Wellington. But when doctors of divinity speak like madmen, it is only the depth of their theological learning, and they are only the more admired."—p. 217.

By the substitution of abuse for argument, the author only wounds his own cause in the house of its friends. *Bedlam!* doctors of divinity *speaking like madmen!!* and the Christian people only admiring them the more, *because of their lunatic ravings!!!*—this unseemly language applied virtually to Luther, Calvin, and the great body of pastors and people composing the reformed churches, betrays a spirit—not "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." In the context, Dr. Carson speaks of "the infant faith of Luther," and "the imputative infant faith of Calvin." The dogma thus attributed to Calvin we have been unable to trace in his

*Institutes and Commentaries on Scripture*, while we can prove the alleged tenet of Luther to be discountenanced by the *Libri Symbolici* containing the doctrinal standards of the Lutheran church. In common fairness the author should have produced his authority for ascribing such sentiments to these distinguished reformers.

Against the admission of infants into the church militant, the preceding extract contains the semblance of an argument, purporting to be founded on analogy. Infants, it appears, must be excluded from the Christian church, because it would be absurd to raise an army of infants to oppose an invading enemy, and the general who should make such a proposal would be dismissed as insane. We arraign the logic of this argument as vicious, and its theology as unscriptural.

1. Had Dr. Williams contended for a church militant, made up *exclusively* of infants, his view would have presented dialectic ground for the analogy, by which Dr. Carson has attempted to hold him up to contempt. But neither Dr Williams, nor any other Pædobaptist writer, ever occupied such a position; and hence the reasoning by which he has been so wantonly assailed is totally without foundation. Will it be maintained that infants are not admissible into a community at all, unless on the condition, that if composed entirely of infants, that community would be competent to the discharge of its proper functions? We cannot apprehend that any well informed mind will adopt a principle which derives no support from the history of the church, and of which even the world furnishes palpable contradictions. Some knowledge and experience, it will be admitted, are essential



to the efficient discharge of the duties which the British constitution assigns to the house of lords ; yet the prince of Wales from the period of his birth or baptism, has occupied the first place on the roll of that Rt. Honourable House. What! *An infant legislator!!* Should any statesman be absurd enough to propose the organization of a *parliament of infants*, he would thereby prove himself well qualified for admission into a lunatic asylum. Had Dr. Carson kept before him the distinction between an assembly composed of infants alone, and one in which infants form a fractional part, it would have prevented him from resorting to an argument, which displays indeed his powers of sarcasm, but is illogical in its structure, and palpably unjust to the views of his opponents.

2. We maintain that Dr. Carson's attack on *militant infants* is as emphatically repugnant to the principles and practice of the word of God, as to the ecclesiastical polity of Pædobaptists. Will any man who has studied his Bible, venture to deny that infants were included in the ancient covenant, and entered into the membership of the Jewish church? The fact stands out so broadly and prominently in the Hebrew Scriptures, that we may be accused of having wasted time in its establishment. But Baptists will probably acknowledge that for all purposes contemplated in this argument, the Jewish church was the church militant; and hence they may perceive, without much difficulty, that Dr. Carson might with equal justice and good taste, have extended his sneer to militant infants received *by divine* warrant into God's ancient church. No doubt Abraham, or Moses

would have accounted it absurd to organize a church composed exclusively of infants; but, under the special direction of the God of the covenant, they saw no objection to the union of the children of his people with their parents in the membership of the church.

The same Scripture principle is beautifully exemplified in the arrangement—Numb. iii. 28—respecting the family of the Kohathites, to all the males of which from *a month old* and upwards, was intrusted the charge of the sanctuary. “What!” Dr. Carson may exclaim, “infants a month old keep God’s sanctuary!! Might we not as well attempt to cure bedlam with syllogisms, as reason with persons who talk of infants keeping a charge.” Yet this appointment emanated from the wisdom of the God of Zion, and it presents an interesting example of infant children associated with their parents in the service of the sanctuary, and thus *formally entitled* to the benefit of early training. Take another instructive instance. When Ammon, Moab, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir marched their combined forces against Jehoshaphat, “All Judah stood before the Lord, with their *little ones*, their wives and their *children*,” 2 Chron. xx. 13, and their united supplication was,—“O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company: . . . but our eyes are upon thee.” v. 12. Here are the militant infants again, and they war to some purpose; for who has the heart to deny that the presence of the little ones before God formed part of the instrumentality by which Judah obtained a victory as signal as it was easy and unexpected?

We dare not join in pouring ridicule upon militant infants. We are more disposed to write a book on the vast influence which infants exert in peace and in war, in the world and in the church. We cordially unite in the Psalmist's noble tribute to the power and wisdom of Jehovah our Lord ;—" Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."—Ps. viii. 2. Such is a specimen of the testimonies and arguments which, in our judgment, go to evince the futility of the grounds alleged for the exclusion of infants from the pale of the new dispensation. Anomalous indeed would be the arrangement, if by divine sanction infants have a place in the Abrahamic church, in the Mosaic church, and in the heavenly church ; while Christianity stands forward in solitary and inveterate hostility to their admission.

## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

### ROOM FOR INFANTS IN THE COMMISSION.

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION, MAT. XXVIII. 19, 20; MARK XVI. 15, 16, CITED AND CONSIDERED.—ITS STRUCTURE VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF CERTAIN BAPTIST ADMISSIONS.—NATURE OF THE CONNECTION IN WHICH THE COMMISSION INTRODUCES BAPTISM.—RELATION OF BAPTISM TO DISCIPLESHIP NOT UNFRIENDLY TO THE ADMISSION OF INFANTS—NOR ITS RELATION TO FAITH—NOR ITS RELATION TO THE SUBSEQUENT TEACHING OF THE BAPTIZED, AS ENJOINED IN MATTHEW.—THE LIMITED VIEW OF INFANT BAPTISM SUSTAINED BY THE COMMISSION.—POSSIBILITY AND HOPE OF UNIFORM ACTION AMONG THE ADVOCATES OF PÆDOBAPTISM.

Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.—“Go ye therefore, and teach—*μαθητεύσατε* *disciple*—all nations, baptizing them in—*ἐν* *into*—the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things,” &c.

Mark xvi. 15, 16.—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”

I. THE structure of the commission, as recorded by Matthew, has already engaged our attention. It was observed that the evangelist does not say,—“disciple all nations, *and* baptize them;” but,—“disciple all nations, *baptizing* them.” The difference is obvious. When the apostle says, Colos. i. 28, “Whom we *preach*,



*warning* every man, and *teaching* every man in all wisdom,"—the form of expression clearly indicates that the preaching *consists* of warning and teaching. See also 1 Tim. ii. 8. This structural principle, singularly enough, can plead Baptist authority. Mr. Campbell, of America, addressing a correspondent in the *Christian Baptist*, p. 630, says, "Have you ever adverted to the import of the participle in the commission, 'Disciple or convert the nations, immersing them?' I need not tell you that this is the exact translation. Let me ask you, then, does not the active participle always, when connected with the imperative (?) mood, express *the manner in which the thing commanded is to be performed?* Cleanse the room, washing it; clean the floor, sweeping it; . . . convert the nations, baptizing them, are exactly the same forms of speech. No person, I presume, will controvert this. If so, then, no man could be called a disciple or a convert, . . . until he was immersed." If it were an object to drive this author into a corner, it might be shown that his view of the commission would necessarily place baptism *before* religious instruction. The man who disciples by immersion, in the same sense as the room is cleansed by washing, must, in every instance, commence his Christian operations with the *act of immersion*. Nay, if he insist upon teaching as preparatory to baptism, he is either taking *a step before the first step*, like President Edwards' imaginary animal; or he is bringing his exposition and his practice into a state of mutual antagonism. Mr. Campbell, we are aware, did not intend to support an exegesis which would virtually compel Christ's ministers to baptize the

people, before preaching to them a crucified Saviour. This course is happily at variance with his principles, though it might fairly claim the support of his lax and unguarded interpretation.

II. We have maintained that the structural sense is modified by the relations which baptism sustains in the commission. Could it be "a reasonable service," we have asked,—would it not rather involve the criminal abuse of things most sacred, to baptize into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one who possesses intelligence, yet is utterly ignorant of the nature of the ordinance, and of the name into which he is baptized? On the plain ground, then, of the connections of baptism in the commission, we have contended for the absolute necessity of at least some measure of religious knowledge to qualify an adult for admission to Christian baptism.

The right of infants to the ordinance is not, in the slightest degree, infringed by this position. We may illustrate our view of the case by a reference to the established practice of Judaism. In the admission of proselytes, the general law of the Jewish church not only imposed circumcision, baptism, and the presentation of a free-will offering; but also took measures for securing the reality of their conversion to the faith, and their determination to observe the ordinances, of the Mosaic institute. This regulation, in a strict sense, applied only to adults. Infants were incompetent to present a free-will offering. Infants could afford no proof of conversion to the Jewish system. Infants could not pledge themselves to the observance of its ceremonial. Yet it is an acknowledged fact that infants

were admitted into the ancient church, and their membership recognised in common with that of their parents. So far, therefore, as the *merits* of the question are concerned, the admission of an infant proselyte into the Jewish church, and the admission of an infant disciple into the Christian church stand upon precisely the same level. In both cases also the general law is substantially the same, being framed with an especial, though by no means exclusive view to the accession of adults. It may be asserted indeed that the Jewish church had explicit warrant for enrolling the children of proselytes on the list of its members; and we cordially admit the fact, while we shall endeavour to show that the Christian church has implicit warrant—warrant sufficient and scriptural—for a procedure strictly analogous.

III. The scriptural connection of baptism with discipleship leaves room for infants in the commission. “Disciple all nations, baptizing them.” This observation touches what our Baptist brethren consider to be their stronghold:—if therefore we are successful here, their remaining defences will prove a cheap and easy conquest.

According to the commission, the field of apostolic labour was the world, and the authorized discipleship by baptism comprised all the nations. The enterprise bore the stamp of intellectual grandeur, united with boundless benevolence, while the machinery devised for its accomplishment reflected “the wisdom that is from above.” At no period, indeed, had the Jewish economy been closed against the entrance of Gentile converts with their children;—still its provisions were on a stinted scale,

being peculiarly adapted to the people of Israel. Whereas the system of Christianity, intended alike for every kindred, nation, tongue, and people, prepared to go forth in a movement of friendly aggression upon all the tribes of the earth.

This august and holy undertaking the author of our religion saw meet to intrust, in the first instance, to the sole instrumentality of ministers chosen out of the Jewish church. Let this consideration be well weighed. "Disciple all nations, baptizing them"—was the command of our Saviour to Jews, members of a church which from the hour of its nativity,—from the days of Abraham,—had been accustomed to receive little children in common with their parents, and which still continued to affix its seal of initiation to the infant sons of both Jews and proselytes. Nor is this all. The recognition of these little ones depended on no human title-deeds;—it held directly under the God of Abraham. Leavened by this principle of church membership, the apostles received the commission to disciple all nations, and they entered upon its execution, cognizant of no religious system human or divine, which excluded infants from its privileges. With their views and feelings, therefore, unless prevented by some specific instruction, they must, in accordance with the uniform practice of God's church, have regarded the children of converts as entitled to the ordinance of baptism. There was nothing in the external rite, in whatever mode administered, to forbid the application of water to infants. On this point there is no room for diversity of judgment. But *discipleship*, our opponents allege, is incompatible with *infancy*; and



hence the commission, they insist, contains a specific instruction, confining baptism to adults. This is their position in its strength, and we shall show it to be utterly untenable.

If the idea expressed by μαθητῆς were borrowed from the schools of Grecian philosophy, the term, we admit, would be inapplicable to an infant. It would have been inconvenient, not to say unprofitable, for an infant to attend the prelections of a *Peripatetic* philosopher. But who would go to classic Greece for the rule or standard of discipleship in the church of Christ? Infants were not placed under the care of Grecian sages to imbibe the elements of science; but infants were placed under the care of the God of Abraham, as children of the covenant. A proselyte to Judaism might with the utmost propriety, be designated a disciple of Moses, and the children of a proselyte, including infants, being regarded as young proselytes, were in fact young disciples. This identification of proselytism with discipleship our opponents will probably repudiate on grounds satisfactory to themselves. "The word disciple," we are told by Dr. Carson, "implies teaching in the correlate, and capability of learning in the disciple," and "it is applied to the followers of Christ, as it did (!) to the followers of the philosophers." This sentence exhibits confusion of thought which a philologist will easily detect; but let that pass. The author, on the principle assumed, peremptorily denies to infants the name and rank of disciples, denouncing the contrary view as inconsistent with Scripture, and an outrage on common sense. His definition of disciple is to a certain extent founded; but

applied universally, as he no doubt intended, we shall find it to be incorrect. The question is not, whether *μαθητῆς* may be employed to denote an adult. That this use of the term is proper all are agreed. We rejoice that in all ages, Christ has had multitudes of disciples, who gladly embraced his instructions, submitted to his laws, and laboured in all things to adorn the doctrine of their Saviour. But let no man deceive himself by imagining that when he builds up adult discipleship, he is pulling down infant discipleship. We are advocates for both, convinced that each is sustained by Scripture testimony.

Discipleship, in the simplest view of it, does not necessarily imply knowledge. The mere entrance of a pupil under the care of a master *constitutes* discipleship, and should he continue under instruction till his last hour, he is still no more than a disciple. The truth of these statements is so apparent as not to call for illustration. On the other hand knowledge does not necessarily imply discipleship. Many of the Jews doubtless received knowledge from Christ as a religious teacher, —were instructed by his public discourses, though *they* would have spurned the name of disciples, and *all* would have felt it to be a misnomer. We cheerfully admit that Christian discipleship, in our view of it, implies instruction; but we deny that any discipleship necessarily implies the *present instruction* of the *μαθητῆς*. For the distinction we claim universal acceptance, whatever may become of its importance to the cause of infant baptism.

But though discipleship may commence prior to

instruction, it will still be asserted that the relation cannot exist apart from a present capability of instruction. Might we not contend, with equal truth, that proselytism to the Jewish faith necessarily implied a present capability of instruction; yet are we assured on indubitable evidence that the infant son of a proselyte was admitted to the initiatory rite at the same time with his father, and that the term proselyte formed a common appellation for parent and child. We can scarcely conceive of a parallelism more complete and unexceptionable. In addition, however, to the evidence supplied by this interesting analogy, we shall look for testimony more direct, if not more satisfactory in the *usage* of the terms μαθητῆς and μαθητεύω. The occurrence of μαθητῆς in the Gospels, though frequent, casts little light on the subject, inasmuch as it is appropriated, in the great majority of instances, to the *twelve* whom Jesus was training for the work of the apostleship. In other cases, and particularly in several examples from the *Acts of the Apostles*, the word is of indeterminate application, and therefore furnishes no evidence. Thus Acts vi. 1, informs us that “the number of the disciples was multiplied;” in v. 2, we read of “the multitude of the disciples;” and James and the elders at Jerusalem, xxi. 2, say to Paul, “thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe.” From such general allusions we can derive no decisive information touching the point at issue. They neither prove nor disprove the doctrine of infant discipleship. When Christ’s followers are referred to under the designation of believers, no warrant, as we shall presently discover,

is afforded for the exclusion of infants; and when the term disciples is employed without limitation, such usage, we admit, cannot bear witness in favour of the claims of infants. In regard to positive evidence for or against, many of the occurrences being destitute of the circumstances which render the application of a term specific, are thus constrained to preserve a strict neutrality.

An instance of more value to the interpreter is found in the address of the Pharisees to the blind man, whose sight Jesus restored, John ix. 28, “We are Moses’ *disciples*.” On the application of μαθηταὶ here, Lampe observes,—“In latiori sensu illa hic sumitur pro quocunque assecla doctrinæ alicujus.” Elsewhere, he states that the term is sometimes used in a more restricted sense to denote those who placed themselves as pupils under the educational training of the prophets, and wise men. In this acceptation we often meet the corresponding term in Rabbinical literature. As examples of the *latis sensus*, Lampe refers to Matthew xxviii. 19; John iv. 1; and Acts xi. 26;—passages in which professed adherents to Christ’s cause are styled μαθηταί, *disciples*, though they were not, like the *twelve*, formally enrolled under his care as their teacher. This greater latitude of application enlarges almost indefinitely the number of persons entitled to rank as disciples. When the term is confined, for instance, to the young men educated in the schools of the prophets, it comprehends only a very small number of Jewish males; but in the proposition,—“We are Moses’ disciples,”—it may be fairly understood of the whole Jewish people. The



statement proceeded indeed from the leaders of a particular sect ; yet the *design* evidently was to stigmatize the blind man as a disciple of Christ, in contradistinction to the Jewish people in general as the adherents of Moses. The man who fell away, or apostatized, was a disciple of Christ, all who remained staunch to Judaism were disciples of Moses. Hence we are warranted to include in this discipleship the nation at large, without distinction of sex or age. To Moses they universally looked up as their teacher, and all were regarded as the disciples of Moses. This view corresponds with the meaning of the phrase מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ, *Moses our Rabbi*, which is noticed by Schoettgen and Lampe as of frequent occurrence in Jewish writings. This title not only suggests to our minds a fine conception of the dignified position of Moses as the Rabbi of Israel throughout their generations ; but the import we assign to it is sustained by the revealed fact that the circumcised infant was a debtor to do the whole law of Moses, and trained from the tenderest age, to the discharge of this burdensome obligation. It would seem forced and unnatural, therefore, to exclude little children from the wider acceptance of μαθητής, inasmuch as they formed part of the discipleship of that interesting community over which Moses presided as their divinely appointed instructor.

That practical saving effect might attend this early discipleship, either in the Jewish or Christian church, has been already noticed in the history of Timothy, who from a child (ἀπὸ βρέφους) *knew the holy Scriptures*. We shall not enter into any argument with the view to evince the propriety of designating Timothy μαθητής, a

disciple from the cradle. He who from *infancy* knew the Scriptures, must have been from infancy a disciple of Moses, or of the Shiloh whom Moses predicted.

To a class of testimonies found chiefly in the fifteenth chapter of Acts Dr. Wall has alluded, though he cannot be said to have elicited their full force. In the days of the apostles, a number of Jewish Christians whose zeal greatly outstripped their knowledge and discretion, insisted on imposing the Mosaic ritual upon Gentile converts. "It was needful," they argued, Acts xv. 5, "to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." "The apostles and elders" at Jerusalem, having considered "this matter," resisted the object of the Christian Pharisees; and Peter boldly denounced it as the imposition "of a yoke upon the neck of *the disciples*, which," said he, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. *v.* 10. That these disciples were the Gentile portion of the Christian church is manifest, and that the yoke designed for them included circumcision the context clearly demonstrates. See *vv.* 1, 5. Still farther, it is incontestable that this yoke applied equally to infants and adults. The very zealots who laboured to impose it were furious against Paul, Acts xxi. 21, because they had been informed that he taught "the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to *circumcise* their *children*." From this testimony Dr. Wall rightly infers "that those sticklers for circumcision mentioned in Acts xv. 5," intended the rite to apply to Gentile converts on the same principle on which it was administered to the Jews themselves. Fathers, adults of every age, must

submit to the ordinance, infants cannot be exempted. But while the inference is perfectly just, the author has omitted evidence more direct, and probably more convincing. We learn from *v. 1*, referring to the transaction before us, that the Jewish zealots insisted on the Gentiles being circumcised "*after the manner of Moses.*" It was not circumcision limited to adults, but the circumcision of the Mosaic law which they announced to be indispensable. It was emphatically *eighth-day* circumcision. The yoke, then, was framed for the necks both of infants and adults; but the apostle calls the parties for whom it was intended, disciples, and therefore we are precluded from expounding the term disciples to the exclusion of infants. Nay in succeeding generations, as Dr. Wall observes, the yoke of circumcision "would have fallen on the infant children only;" yet from its connection with the entire Mosaic ritual, the enforcement of the observance would not have ceased to involve the guilt of "putting an intolerable yoke upon the neck of the disciples." Who then will pretend to argue from the usage of the terms that infancy and discipleship are incompatible?

We may now perceive how little ground Dr. Carson had for asserting, that "the word *disciple* is applied to the followers of Christ, as it did to the followers of the philosophers." This assertion he has not attempted to prove, intimating that he can do without it. We affirm it to be incapable of proof, except in regard to the *twelve* disciples of our Lord, to whom it is strictly applicable. In the case of the great mass of Christians, the term is employed in a wider and more generic acceptance, and

even infants do not lie beyond the range of its established extension.

The relation of μαθηταὶ to infants may be farther evinced by patristic testimony. In Origen's work against Celsus, B. iii. p. 128, we read as follows :—"Αἱ τοῦ Θεοῦ Χριστοῦ μαθητευθεῖσαι ἐκκλησίαι,—“The churches of God, *discipled* to Christ.” The churches are here represented as μαθητευθεῖσαι, *made disciples*, implying necessarily that every member was μαθητῆς *a disciple* of Christ. Comprehensive in its character, and of no doubtful meaning, the language obviously includes the entire membership of the churches of which Origen speaks. But we have evidence that in the age of this father, infants enjoyed the privilege of church membership, and therefore it follows irresistibly that infants came under the designation of disciples. On the subject of infant discipleship, no testimony could be more distinct and pertinent; though in these respects it cannot claim any superiority over the clear declarations by the same author in support of infant baptism.

The value of this evidence the Baptist may consider lowered, on the alleged ground that in the days of Origen, μαθητεύω, turned aside from its proper meaning, had become accommodated to an unscriptural state of Christian discipleship. But the objector cannot prove the change in meaning which his allegation assumes, and hence the objection is utterly impotent and worthless. Besides we can produce similar testimony from fathers who, according to his chronology, flourished before the rise of infant baptism. Antipædobaptists, as Dr. Wardlaw states, “are accustomed to allege that the



first writer by whom infant baptism is expressly mentioned is Tertullian, who lived in the beginning of the third century, a hundred years and more after the apostolic age." Mr. Booth, Dr. Cox and others speak very positively on this point, and the former is pleased to assert, as an affair of great consequence, that "Justin Martyr, in his Second Apology, when describing baptism, mentions only that of adults." If then infant baptism had no existence in the age of Justin, it cannot be charged with corrupting the application of the term *μαθηταί*. What that application was we ascertain from the following testimony contained in his First Apology, near the beginning.—"Numbers of men and women *sixty* and *seventy* years old,—οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθητεύθησαν τῷ Χριστῷ,—*who from childhood were disciplined to Christ*, still continue uncorrupt." Justin was for several years contemporary with Polycarp, and Papias, and his First Apology appeared about A.D. 150, or, as some maintain, ten or twelve years earlier. The disciples to whom he refers, must have been, therefore, born within the age of the apostles; and this unspeakably enhances the importance of the testimony. We are disposed to prize it also, as proceeding from a father whose extensive travels and intercourse among the early Christians must have made him perfectly acquainted with the application of ecclesiastical terms.

Let us then endeavour to ascertain Justin's meaning. The writer introduces us to aged persons of both sexes, whose discipleship to Christ had commenced *in childhood*, instead of being deferred till they arrived at the condition of adults. Dr. Gale was angry with Dr. Wall,

because the latter took the liberty of rendering ἐκ παιδων “*in childhood*.” But his captiousness reflected little credit on his critical acquaintance with the force of the Greek prepositions. That ἐκ strictly and properly contemplates the point of departure as *within* the object denoted by its regimen is demonstrated by our more philosophical grammarians, and ably maintained by Dr. Carson. On this ground we contend that the discipleship of the Christians referred to is viewed by the author as having originated *within* the period of *childhood*.

The only exception which a candid opponent will take to the evidence thus contributed to the cause of Pædobaptism, must be founded on the comparative uncertainty of the age indicated by the words ἐκ παιδων. Does the language obviously include infancy, or may it not apply to children over whom a number of years have rolled? Resolved to press no testimony a hair's breadth beyond what we believe to be its true import, we do not affirm that infancy is necessarily included in the testimony of Justin; while on the other hand we maintain resolutely that its exclusion is neither declared nor implied. Taken in their plain unvarnished sense, the terms comprehend the two extremities of human life, the first the time of childhood, the last the advanced age of sixty or seventy years. They also inform us that before the close of the apostolic period, children were numbered among the disciples of Christ, and thus recognized as part of his mystical body. The term παῖδες may doubtless be used in such connections as to denote persons who have long bid adieu to their tender years; but, when it is the object of an author to mark distinction of age, its applica-

tion is no less definite than that of our vernacular *childhood* as contrasted with *manhood*, or *old age*. Under this view, the passage appears to us fairly susceptible of no interpretation which can be reconciled with the doctrine of our opponents respecting exclusive adult discipleship and baptism. Justin's, or to speak more correctly, apostolic discipleship of children they are bound to repudiate, and yet its intimate and evident bearing on the exposition of the apostolic commission they have no adequate means of neutralizing.

That μαθητεία is applied by this father, in common with other ecclesiastical writers, to disciples in adult life through all its stages, we freely admit, this usage being perfectly consistent with the facts of history, and the laws of interpretation. We do not, of course, argue for the *childhood* of *all* disciples : our position is simply that little ones were included in their number ;—and hence no imaginable amount of adult discipleship could counterbalance the weight of one example of the admission of children to the same privilege. No considerate man will expect these two classes of facts to be attested by equally copious evidence. In its inroads upon Judaism and idolatry, the gospel would manifestly number among its earliest trophies adult converts, as is now witnessed in the progress of missions among the heathen ; and to such conversions would be assigned the chief prominence in the record of its achievements. The Baptist must also remember that in sundry Scripture statements, the omission of all direct reference to children neither implies nor is compatible with the idea of their exclusion.

Finally on this topic, we repel the charge of outraging

common sense. In applying μαθητῆς to an infant we do not take account of its *present* capabilities; neither do we disconnect discipleship from instruction,—but we hold the instruction to be future. Is there any law of language, is there any principle of common sense, to forbid this application? Let the Baptist produce it, if he can. The male Kohathite, a month old, was a keeper of the sanctuary, not on the ground of *present* competency to the trust, but because he was designated to the office, and to be trained for the discharge of its duties from infancy. The analogy is clear and strong. On the same principle, we style an infant a disciple of Christ, as solemnly dedicated to the Saviour, to be educated in his school, influenced by his example, and prepared for his kingdom and glory. This view of infant discipleship we maintain to be both scriptural and reasonable; and it avoids the ill-judged positions of Mr. Bickersteth, on which Dr. Carson with a heart and a hand discharged some of his great guns. At the same time we take leave to express our strong conviction that *actual* discipleship in Christian families often commences at a period of life which mankind in general would be disposed to identify with infancy.

IV. The scriptural connection of baptism with faith leaves room for infants in the commission. From a comparison of the commission by Matthew with that by Mark, the Baptist concludes that the *disciples* of the one evangelist are the *believers* of the other. It is worthy of notice that the statement of Mark respecting faith and baptism does not appear in the form of a commission. It is not a command to baptize believers, but an



authoritative assurance that salvation was suspended on the faithful reception of the gospel, and submission to its initiatory ordinance. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." The faith of the professing Christian must be attested and sustained by submission to gospel requirement. On the other hand, "he that believeth not,"—though he may make a profession and be baptized, and whether he do so or not,—“shall be damned.” Now we have argued that a credible profession of faith is necessary to the baptism of an adult; and we have also maintained that the author of our religion did not intend saving faith to be the essential condition of the church's baptism. How shall we reconcile this with the testimony of Mark, which is supposed to establish the doctrine of the baptism of believers, and of none but believers?

Those who are most strenuous in upholding this view appear to have adopted a popular, rather than an exact and comprehensive interpretation of their proof-text. Its true import will be found diametrically opposed to exclusive believer baptism. When the evangelist says, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," the unbelief referred to may unquestionably exist either apart from baptism, or united with baptism. The unbeliever, baptized or unbaptized, shall be condemned. Does not the clause imply that in point of fact, faith might not be coextensive with the administration of baptism? Does it not at least prepare our minds for such a case as that of Simon Magus, who on a mere profession of faith was admitted to the ordinance, though "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." The faith

which preceded his baptism was not the faith which stands inseparably connected with salvation,—was not saving faith; and hence his admission to the rite did not exemplify the formula—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” In every age these words apply only to a part of the baptized, while another part, like Simon, are still under condemnation. Though baptized, they are unhappily in unbelief, and therefore they necessarily come under the sentence,—“He that believeth not, shall be condemned.” Without true faith, there is for the adult no salvation, but without true faith the adult may receive baptism, as is proved by the practice of apostolic times. The unbeliever, it will be objected, whatever his profession, has no right to the ordinance in the sight of God; but the question relates not to what may be *right in the sight of God*, but to what is the *rule for the guidance of man*. Simon Magus had no right in the sight of God, yet Philip felt it his bounden duty to admit him to baptism. The distinction is often overlooked, though indispensable to the understanding of the subject. These views demand the serious attention of all whom it may concern; for if they are correct, the dogma of exclusive believer baptism is not founded on the word of God.

Influenced by such considerations we cannot identify the *disciples* of Matthew with the believers of Mark. We stand upon the solid rock of Scripture fact, when we affirm that the *believers* of Mark do not comprehend *all the baptized*; but we see no ground for a similar restriction in regard to the *disciples* of Matthew. Had the latter asserted that all baptized disciples should be

saved, as the former asserts respecting believers, the *identity* for which Dr. Carson argues would have been sustained. But failing this it is a "baseless fabric." Let it not be inferred that the two evangelists present differences which it is impossible, or even difficult to reconcile. In the language of Matthew, there is nothing to prevent the admission of Simon Magus; and few will doubt that such a case is covered by the negative part of Mark's statement. Thus complete harmony is restored, by simply keeping before our minds the modifying influence of Mark's sentence of condemnation.

We may be reminded, however, that though the apostolic age witnessed and sanctioned the baptism of persons who were not true believers, the cause of infant baptism can derive no benefit from this fact, so long as we contend for the necessity of a previous credible profession. On this subject, we are bold to say, we will not yield to the Baptist in assigning to Christian faith a high place and prominence. In vital faith we discover a principle peculiarly suited to the character of the Christian economy, and not to be overlooked in receiving the Gentiles into the church of a holy God. It would have been inconsistent with the design of the church's Head, and the well-being of her members, to admit Gentiles to Christian fellowship irrespective of the acknowledgment of Christ as their Saviour, and the avowed purpose of submission to his laws and authority. Such a course would have been still more glaringly at variance with God's procedure towards his ancient people. Simultaneously with the first promulgation of the Gospel, the world witnessed the impressive spectacle of the rejection

of the seed of Abraham,—that nation which had so long constituted the chosen heritage of the Lord. On what ground did the King of Zion resort to what may be regarded the extremity of punitive infliction? Clearly because his people, by the contemptuous rejection of the Messiah, gave the crowning proof that they were children in whom was no faith. Deut. xxxii. 20. It could not be expected that God would cast off the Jews for unbelief, and receive the Gentiles without regard to faith. As branches of the good olive tree, the Israelites “were broken off because of unbelief;” while the Gentiles who had been previously a wild olive tree, were grafted in by the instrumentality of faith. Without faith neither Gentiles nor Jews could “partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.” In addition therefore to the importance of faith as a principle of great intrinsic value, its necessity in the admission of the Gentiles was imperative in order to preserve the character and consistency of the divine government.

These views lead necessarily and directly to the conclusion, that when faith is insisted on, infants are not thereby excluded from the new covenant or its initiatory rite, as will now become apparent. In Rom. xi. 20, the apostle says of the Jews, “because of unbelief they were broken off;” and to the Gentile he says, “thou standest by faith.” Faith was therefore equally indispensable to the stability of Jew and Gentile, in their covenant relation to the God of Abraham. Does it not follow by necessary consequence, that as the requirement of faith in the case of the Jew confessedly did not exclude infants from the Mosaic church, a similar requirement



on the part of the Gentile should not be interpreted to the exclusion of infants from the Christian church. Gentile Christians are said to stand by faith,—which statement, according to some, warrants the inference that the church of Christ must be composed exclusively of adults. Let us test the soundness of the argument by applying it to the Jewish side of the question. When God's ancient people were cut off for unbelief, we must forsooth conclude, by a parity of reasoning, that all who underwent excision, were capable of faith, that is, were adults! Were there no infants, then, in the Jewish church?—none in all the families cast away for their sins, and deprived of the federal position and privileges of their fathers? The idea is preposterous. Infants as well as adults shared the calamity, when the branches “were broken off because of unbelief;”—parents and their children were involved in a common judicial rejection. On the same principle, the door of faith can admit Gentiles and their offspring, inasmuch as the necessity of faith no more implies the exclusion of Gentile children from privilege, than the charge of unbelief implied the exemption of Jewish children from punishment.

It evidently accords with the ascertained procedure of the Head of the covenant, that the most pointed inculcation of faith and even obedience, is not to be understood as excluding the infant children of God's people. This is the doctrine which Calvin, with his own peculiar mastery of the subject, has taught in his comment on the passage in Mark. We adduce the substance of his exposition.—“Nunc quæritur, qua lege

Deus qui ante fuerunt alieni in filios cooptet. Certe negari non potest, ubi eos semel amplexus in suum favorem, quin eundem prosequatur erga eorum filios ac nepotes. Communiter se Christi adventu Gentibus ac Judæis patrem exhibuit: quæ ergo olim Judæis data fuit promissio, inter Gentes hodie quoque vigeat necesse est, *Ero Deus tuus, et Deus seminis tui post te* (Gen. xvii. 7). Ita eos, qui fide in Ecclesiam Dei ingressi sunt, videmus cum sua sobole censi in Christi membris, et in salutis hereditatem simul vocari." The passage evinces the solidity and mental grasp befitting an interpreter of Scripture. We may exclude infants from the Christian economy; but their exclusion will be based on a limited and unscriptural view of faith, and of the functions which it has discharged in the church under all economies. On the other hand, taking a comprehensive survey of the Jewish as compared with the Christian church, we are irresistibly impressed with the conviction that when a people are invited to believe or charged with unbelief, there is no warrant whatever for expounding the language to the exclusion of their infant seed, and consequently no ground for debarring such infants from the initiatory observance of any divine dispensation.

V. The subsequent teaching of the baptized does not militate against the admission of infants to the ordinance. The commission provides for the instruction of the baptized.—“Teaching them to observe all things,” &c. This instruction, our opponents say, *immediately* follows baptism, and hence all the baptized must be capable of understanding the word, and obeying the will of Christ. But in the case of infants, years must elapse before this

educational process can properly commence ;—and this is held to be a sufficient reason for *inferring* them out of the commission.

We have here another specimen of that popular logic which does vast execution with a certain order of mind. In dealing with it, we request attention to the fact that the commission is a general formula, couched in terms of manifest comprehensiveness, and not descending to particulars. Expressions of this nature occur elsewhere in Scripture. Calvin notices as an example the apostolic direction that “if any would not work, neither should he eat,”—requiring all without exception to labour as the condition of receiving food, yet certainly not imposing upon the churches as a duty the starvation of infants.

A class of parallels from which we have derived more satisfaction, may be traced in the arrangements for instructing the people of God under the Jewish economy. In the blessing which Moses pronounced on the tribe of Levi, Deut. xxxiii. 10, he said, “They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law.” If we take as our hermeneutical guides, some writers on the commission, we shall be forced to maintain that infants were not included in the extension of the terms *Jacob* and *Israel*. The people, we must believe, were all adults, because others are incapable of instruction, and cannot therefore be comprehended in this educational precept. But when we view the language in the light of a general formula, we instantly perceive the extent and appropriateness of the instruction provided for all Israel. The Levites were to teach all, their commission embraced

Jacob and Israel, and in its execution the entire church and nation had an obvious interest. Infants indeed could not at once receive instruction in the divine law, yet the wisdom of God included infants, inasmuch as religious training must commence from the tenderest years, and no apology be suggested to parents for keeping back their young children from instruction. We perceive therefore that teaching may be enjoined without implying the exclusion of infants from the parties to be taught,—nay in circumstances which prove that they are necessarily included;—why should not the teaching enjoined in the commission be understood with a similar latitude of application? Many such parallels will occur to the student of the Old Testament.

The same usage may be illustrated from Acts xv. 5, relating to the effort of the Christian Pharisees to impose circumcision on the Gentiles, and “*to command them to keep the law of Moses.*” In both the objects here contemplated, infants were manifestly included. These blind zealots urged that the Mosaic ritual should apply to the Gentiles, as it did to the Jews. They were for circumcising infants as well as adults,—they were for commanding infants as well as adults, to keep the law of Moses. But this command implies teaching, and was yet to be addressed to infants in common with adults. How vain is it therefore—how opposed to the established usage of language, to contend that when teaching, human or divine, is inculcated, infants are thereby necessarily excluded from the number of those who participate in the benefits of the enjoined education.

We have now seen that the *discipleship*, *faith*, and



*teaching* referred to in the commission, are by no means incompatible with the recognition of the claims of infants, and consequently raise no barrier against the practice of infant baptism. The doctrine we have uniformly advocated is that if infants are not explicitly or by implication excluded from the initiatory rite,—and we have found no evidence for such exclusion—their title is equally valid with that of Joshua to the leadership of Israel, or of Paul to the apostleship of the Gentiles. Proceeding a step farther, we have firmly and deliberately maintained that to a comprehensive and accurate view of the different economies which God has established with man, the terms of the commission do obviously appear in perfect keeping with the admission of infants into the new covenant church by the rite of Christian baptism. Were it necessary, a usage closely analogous could be traced in many of the fathers. Thus Basil the Great insisted on faith prior to baptism—πιστεῦσαι γὰρ δὲ πρότερον ἔτα τῷ βαπτίσματι ἐπισφραγισάσθαι. *Contr. Eunom.* Lib. iii.—but not to the exclusion of infants from the ordinance, the author being an advocate for infant baptism. See Matthies on Bapt. p. 188.

The opposing view, as defended by Dr. Carson, requires some notice. “No command,” says he, “no explanation can bring unbelievers into the commission that enjoins the baptism of believers. Even if I found another command, enjoining the baptism of the infants of believers, I should not move an inch from my position. I should still say this is not included in the apostolical commission. . . . There would then be two baptisms, on quite different grounds; the one on the

ground of faith, the other on the ground of descent. . . . I would gainsay an angel from heaven who should say that this commission may extend to the baptism of any but believers. His assertion would imply a contradiction. . . . Here then I stand entrenched, and I defy the ingenuity of earth and hell to drive me from my position.”—p. 170. Were the force of the argument in this extract at all equal to the fervour of the author’s polemic heroism, reply would be hopeless. But as most of the points on which his chief reliance is placed, have been obviated in our preceding inquiries, it will not be difficult to dispose of what remains.

We observe then—1. That Dr. Carson’s views of believer baptism are inconsistent with the practice of Baptist churches. On his principle, when an unbeliever is immersed, whether by mistake or otherwise, the service is no baptism. It violates, instead of executing the commission. Yet should the unbeliever subsequently repent and become a believer, these churches do not repeat the service. They are thus chargeable with sanctioning unbeliever baptism, which is surely no less objectionable than infant baptism. Let the Baptist take the mote out of his own eye.

2. That there is room in the commission for both infant baptism and adult baptism. This we have already evinced, and we merely refer to an additional example. When God says of Israel, Numb. xiv. 11, 12, “How long will it be ere they believe me? . . . I will smite them with pestilence,” &c., might we not challenge the powers on earth and *below*, to include infants in the divine threatening? God would not charge infants with

unbelief. The people whom he criminales must have been all adults, and they *alone* are to be pestilence-stricken and disinherited? Alas! for such confident exposition: the righteous sentence of God would have involved infants and adults in a common doom.—To predicate discipleship or faith of a community, or charge them with unbelief, by no means implies, according to Scripture usage, the exclusion of infants as members of that community. There is room for infants among the *disciples* of Christ,—room for them among the *believing* people of God; and the great primeval covenant in whose chartered blessings they are interested, remains in undisturbed harmony with the arrangements of the commission.

3. That to make infant baptism and adult baptism two distinct ordinances is a piece of foolish hypercriticism. We might retort by asserting that in Baptist churches, there are two baptisms: the one of believers, the other of unbelievers. True, they do not intend the latter; but *their intention* does not destroy *its reality*; nor do they even attempt to retrieve the error committed in the immersion of an unbeliever. Of Dr. Carson's *two* baptisms, one, he says, is on the ground of faith, the other on that of descent. By the same logic we can prove the existence of *two* circumcisions in the family of Abraham; the one administered to the patriarch as a seal of the righteousness of his faith, the other to Isaac on the ground of filial relation. But *Scripture* recognises only one circumcision for both; and Dr. Carson has produced no adequate reason why *its* "one baptism" may not also comprise both classes of subjects.

4. The doctrine of exclusive believer baptism involves the administrator in the unavoidable abuse of a Christian ordinance. Baptize none but believers, says the alleged command,—baptize no unbeliever. Is any pastor or church competent to execute the commission, in this view of its requirements? We endeavour to do so, replies Mr. Campbell, but through error of judgment, in *nine* cases out of *ten* we admit unbelievers! What a wholesale profanation. In nine instances Mr. Campbell and his adherents violate their Lord's commission, while in the *tenth* alone is it faithfully executed. Is this violation *guiltless*, and was Philip *guilty* in baptizing Simon Magus? These are questions of grave import. We defy mortal man to execute the commission in the Baptist version of its injunctions. We would gainsay the fitness of an angel from heaven who should attempt the undertaking. In fact, if baptism is to be confined *in practice* to believers alone, either God himself must become its administrator, or Christian pastors must be endowed with an infallible discernment of spirits. *We* are involved in the same difficulty, it may be said, when we limit the ordinance generally to the children of Christian parents. But the cases are not parallel. We do not pretend to judge the spiritual state of the parents before God. On the humble ground of a credible profession, attended by what we consider Christian deportment, we are content to take our stand: while the Baptist, as we understand the case, is solemnly bound to administer the ordinance to none but true believers. Unless he can *search the heart*, his incompetency to execute such a commission is indubitable.



Let us now glance at Dr. Carson's military illustration. —“Suppose the government gives orders to the colonel of a regiment, to fill up a certain company with men six feet high. The colonel sends out his recruiting officers with instructions accordingly. When the recruits are brought to the standard, they are found in general to measure only five feet eight inches. Have the recruiting officers fulfilled their commission?” So far from it, that the author pronounces their conduct unsoldierly and degrades them to the ranks.—In this parable, which was spoken against Pædobaptists, the recruiting officer is *a minister* of the Gospel, the man of six feet, *a believer*, and he of five feet eight, *an infant*. Let us now see whether the measure with which Dr. Carson metes may not be measured to him again. Ten of Mr. Campbell's baptized adults are brought to the standard, only one of whom is of the prescribed stature. Ten were baptized, “but where are the nine?” The orders, Dr. Carson alleges, are too plain to be mistaken; yet his brother Baptist is so sorely at fault in their execution, that in nine cases out of ten, he mistakes five feet eight inches for six feet!! If the rule is Scriptural, it must apply to Baptist, as well as Pædobaptist; and the recruiting officers of both, we fear, will incur the displeasure of the colonel. Suppose some Sergeant Campbell to plead on behalf of himself and his comrades in delinquency, that they were influenced by no spirit of resistance to orders—that they had carefully measured all the recruits on enlisting them—and that these *five-feet-eights* without exception appeared to them to be *six-feets*! “How is this?” demands the colonel, “Recruiting officers in Her

Majesty's service unable to distinguish six feet from five feet eight! Yours is a case of unparalleled incompetency; and by your own confession, you are fit only for the Muses' Elysium, or—a lunatic asylum."—Let the abettors of Antipædobaptism rest assured that their system possesses no charm against the shafts of a ridicule of which some of them avail themselves as largely and as complacently as if their own views were unassailable, or their opponents dead to every prompting of retaliation.

VI. The limited view of infant baptism is sustained by the commission. We have assigned our reasons for the limitation of baptism in the case of adults;—the question at present before us relates to the propriety of a corresponding limitation in regard to infants. If they are admissible at all,—if the discipleship, the faith, the teaching, referred to in the commission do not exclude them, why, it may be asked, make a distinction among infants, baptizing one class, and refusing baptism to another? We reply—

1. That we can discover in the commission no principle or provision, calculated to set aside the former arrangement regarding infants. Under the Abrahamic and Mosaic economy, this department of the church was limited to the infants of her regular membership, and of such as joined her communion by proselytism. Infants of the heathen as such were manifestly excluded. Does the new economy sanction a different principle of admission, or even indicate any departure in this respect from the antecedent law of church membership? Undoubtedly, reply the advocates of the latitudinarian scheme; for the apostles were commanded to "go and disciple all nations,

baptizing them." But this in our mind does not touch the point, unless it be proved or assumed that persons *in a state of heathenism, without change or profession of change*, were to be admitted to Christian baptism. If a profession was necessary on the part of adults, as we have endeavoured to evince, the injunction to disciple the nations exhibits no inconsistency with the previous law for the admission of infants.

2. The educational provisions of the commission sustain the limited view of infant baptism. Under the Mosaic institute, the machinery of religious instruction was comparatively weak and defective. With the members of the ancient church the increase of knowledge was not so much the subject of experience, as the object of hope and faith. Yet the elder economy evinced a laudable solicitude to train up the children of the church in the righteous ways of the Lord. Judaism had its parental superintendence, and its public Levitical teaching, besides its schools of the prophets, and its lessons inculcated by an impressive succession of divine interpositions. To some extent, therefore, the system provided for the religious training of the children within its bosom, whether of Jewish or proselyte parentage. In the Christian church the educational agency possesses greater amplitude and power; and it appears to hold inseparable relations with the administration of baptism. Could the apostles produce the authority of their Lord for baptizing?—They were bound by the same authority to *teach* the baptized "all things whatsoever he had commanded." The act of baptism must be followed up by the work of Christian education. Those who admin-

ister the ordinance must see to it, that dedication to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit shall not be held up as an isolated ceremonial, utterly inoperative and fruitless. Does it not follow, that where there exists no rational prospect of subsequent training in the nurture of the Lord, we lack one of the essential conditions on which the administration of baptism is justifiable and scriptural? Suppose the teaching which God has joined with the ordinance, as its indispensable supplement, to be morally impossible, would it not be a contravention of the spirit and intent of the commission to baptize in such circumstances? If the child of a heathen, still under the care of heathen parents, were admitted to baptism, would it be practicable, in accordance with the express requirement of the commission, to have that child taught the observance of what Christ has commanded? The offspring of wicked parents in a Christian land are often placed in a similar or worse predicament. Making no profession of religion, perhaps treating the Gospel and its ministers with scorn, and overborne by a rampant infidelity, or a godless and grovelling worldliness, what will such parents do, what can they be expected to do, for the religious training of their children? Impelled by regnant custom, they may seek for a little one the ordinance of Christian baptism,—and the opportunity should by all means be laid hold of for dealing with them faithfully, and pointing out the character of the ordinance, and the parental responsibility incurred in its administration; and, under the divine blessing, the result may be all that a devoted minister of Christ could desire. But should this course only bring out more fully the



evidence of “hardened and impenitent hearts,” the application should be peremptorily refused, if on no other ground, certainly on this, that in the case of these parents, the part of the commission which enjoins the religious teaching of the baptized, must of necessity be *as pearls trampled under the feet of swine*.

Mr. Stovel, *more suo*, seeks for a limiting principle in the *difference of gender* between τὰ ἔθνη and αὐτοὺς in the commission! The true principle we conceive we have discovered, partly in the profession which must precede baptism, and also in the subsequent training of the baptized according to the plain requirement of the commission. It should form a subject of grave concern to Pædobaptist churches, whether on some such basis as this principle suggests, it might not be practicable to erect a common platform of ecclesiastical order. All Pædobaptist churches, we feel satisfied, are deeply solicitous that measures be adopted for bringing up in the fear of the Lord their baptized little ones. This Christian anxiety we regard as not only universal among these churches, but likely from its strength and practical tendency to promote the object which we contemplate as peculiarly desirable. What plan then can be more eligible—what less liable to exception—than to require on the part of parents, or of those who occupy their room, such religious qualifications, as by the divine blessing may carry out the great design of baptism, and prevent its educational responsibilities from becoming a dead letter, or a mockery? We view it as a question affecting the interests of vital godliness; and how these are to be advanced by administering baptism to children

under the superintendence of irreligious or profligate parents, we are utterly at a loss to imagine. With a reasonable provision for Christian training we baptize; and where this is wanting, "what profit is there of" the ordinance? The principle is so simple, and appears to us so essential to the discharge of baptismal obligation, that we trust its intrinsic importance and scriptural character will commend it to the acceptance of those evangelical churches, which concur generally in their views of infant baptism.

Having thus endeavoured to show that the *apostolic commission*, like the *new covenant*, is wide enough to admit infants, and restrictive enough to stipulate for their religious education, we are prepared for passing on to the concluding branch of Scripture testimony to the *subjects* of Christian baptism.

## CHAPTER NINTH.

### ROOM FOR INFANTS IN THE APOSTOLIC BAPTISMS.

CHARACTER OF THE ADULT BAPTISMS RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE.—THE EVIDENCE THEY FURNISH WHOLLY INADEQUATE TO SUSTAIN THE CAUSE OF OUR OPPONENTS.—NO INSTANCE IN ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT, OF ADULT BAPTISM, IN THE SENSE IN WHICH IT IS IMPUGNED BY THE PÆDOBAPTIST, AND FORMS THE PECULIARITY OF THE ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST SYSTEM.—EXAMINATION OF APOSTOLIC TESTIMONIES,—ACTS II. 38, 39, “THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU AND TO YOUR CHILDREN.”—1 COR. VII. 14, *HOLINESS OF CHILDREN*; ITS IMPORT INVESTIGATED—AND INFANTS SHOWN TO BE FEDERALLY HOLY, AND THEREFORE ENTITLED TO BAPTISM.—HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM PROVED TO INVOLVE INFANT BAPTISM.—CONCLUDING REMARK.

WE stated at the outset that the entire ground of the ordinance in *mode* and *subjects*, is not occupied by the controversy between the Baptist and the Pædobaptist. Of this we must be reminded in dealing with the record of apostolic practice. The baptism of an adult Jew or heathen, who forsakes his system and embraces the religion of Christ, is not a service peculiar to our Baptist brethren. No Pædobaptist church in the world could refuse the ordinance to such an applicant, without renouncing its avowed principles. In regard therefore to the admission of adults in these circumstances, both

parties stand upon the same ground, and we shall take special care to guard that ground against the grasping spirit of Antipædobaptist monopoly. The adult, being a new convert, we and our opponents are equally bound to admit to the ordinance of baptism. Let this simple fact be steadily borne in mind, and turned to proper account in the argument, and as a weapon of keen edge it will speedily thin the ranks of those Scripture proofs on which Baptists confidently depend for the triumph of their cause.

1. The adult baptisms recorded in Scripture are mustered against us with more zeal than judgment. These baptisms though not very numerous, the controversial tactician knows to draw out in battle array, so that they may appear a formidable host. Every fresh convert becomes, in fact, an argument incarnate against infant baptism. We are not, however, to be dismayed by such forces; nor shall we permit either our opponents or our own imaginations to invest a neutral power with the attributes of hostility. These baptisms are not unfriendly to our cause. Without a single exception, they were administered to converts from Judaism and idolatry, and as they accord generally with the system of both Baptist and Pædobaptist, they can never yield support to the one in contradistinction to the other. As reasonable would it be to adduce our own missionary adult baptisms against ourselves, as to summon against us the adult baptisms of apostolic times. The precise point of difference must not for a moment be lost sight of. Agreeing with the Baptist in admitting to the ordinance adult converts to Christianity from whatever



quarter, we differ from him with regard to the children of such converts, and more generally with regard to all children who come into the world surrounded by Christian influences and privileges. Such children we baptize in infancy, while he delays the ordinance until they can make a religious profession as adults. From these statements, it follows—

2. That no case of adult baptism in the sense in which it is repudiated by us, and maintained by our opponents, occurs in all the word of God. The Baptist takes pleasure in asserting that the New Testament supplies no instance of infant baptism—an assertion which we shall by and by examine. He may perhaps be startled by our counter-assertion that adult baptism, as a feature of his system, is utterly unknown to apostolic practice. The baptism of a convert from the Jewish faith or from heathenism we have shown to be irrelevant, as belonging alike to both systems. Cancelling it, therefore, as a common quantity, we affirm that there remains not a solitary example of adult baptism in the New Testament. If an instance do exist, the industry of Baptists can produce it. We defy them to do so; though it forms the very species of evidence which is indispensable to the scriptural stability of their system.

3. The distinction marked in our present line of reasoning is important and logical. The term *adult baptism* is used with two different applications, one denoting the ordinance as administered to a Christian convert from another faith, the other embracing the case of children who having grown up under Christian training, are baptized on the profession of their faith in

Christ. These applications are not only distinct, but the distinction cannot be safely overlooked by either party. It would be manifestly illogical to adduce adult baptism in the former acceptation in evidence of the propriety or scripturality of adult baptism in the latter acceptation. As justly might the circumcision of an adult proselyte to Judaism, be alleged in support of deferring till manhood the circumcision of his son. In the one case, we have adult circumcision, in the other infant circumcision; while these observances betray no mutual opposition, or incongruity. Now our opponents confound this clear and well sustained distinction, when they attempt to derive positive support to their cause from the adult baptisms of the New Testament; as is evident from the fact that in so far as their system is impugned by the Pædobaptist, they cannot defend it by a solitary Scripture example.

4. The silence of Scripture on this point should be duly weighed by those who allege its silence in condemnation of infant baptism. Does the Baptist complain that the period of Scripture history is too short to produce instances of *the* adult baptism which alone can uphold his theory? We reply, these instances must be of very slow growth, if the lapse of sixty or seventy years is insufficient to produce one of them. If it was customary in the apostolic age to withhold baptism from the infant children of the multitudes of converts, and let them grow up sustaining to the church the same relations as heathens, is it not strange that no instance can be found of the baptism of any of this large and interesting class? Either there were *such* adult baptisms, or

there were not. If there were, then the mere silence of Scripture is not to be held as disproving their existence, nor could it, on the same principle, disprove the existence of infant baptism. But if there were not, then the children in question must have been either baptized in infancy, or altogether exempted from submission to the ordinance. We are reluctant, in any case to rest an affirmative on the mere silence of a document, and yet the Baptist can show no better foundation for the leading tenet of his system. With respect to infants, we do not profess to stand upon this ground. Our doctrine is that, though not mentioned by name, infants are included in the apostolic administration of baptism. We proceed to canvass Scripture evidence.

Our first testimony forms part of Peter's memorable sermon after the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit. Acts ii. 38, 39. "Repent and be baptized, . . . for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Addressed by a Jew to Jews,—parties "habituated to the idea of the connection of their children with themselves in the promise of the covenant,"—this language must have intimated the *Christian* recognition of that relation between parents and their offspring, which formed a leading feature in the Abrahamic covenant. "It has been quaintly said," observes Bennett in his *Lectures on the Acts*, "that the latitude of the promise was to believers and their children; and the longitude of it, to those who were far off, wherever the Lord our God shall call a people by the Gospel. To say that the

promise is only to those of our children whom the Lord shall call, is to make the mention of the children nugatory; for all who are called have the promise whether they are Christians' children or not."—p. 30.

Baptist writers both in earlier and more recent times have felt it difficult to dispose of the *children* comprehended in this precious promise. At the era of the Reformation, they appear to have taken shelter in a figurative exegesis, contending that by children we are to understand a spiritual seed, the fruit of regeneration. But the objections to this view are insuperable. The passage does not say one word about the new birth; nor are the parties addressed furnished with any clue to the alleged tropical acceptation. God did not hold out the promise to them and to their *regenerate* children, but simply to them and to *their children*; and hence the figured application is wholly gratuitous and unwarrantable. In the present day, it is attempted to nullify the children's interest in this promise by a different exposition. In the call of God (*v.* 39,) the Baptist now discovers a limit affecting parents and children,—the multitude who listened to the apostles and those afar off,—and demanding intelligence on the part of all to whom the promise is fulfilled. It is impossible to do justice to this exegesis without looking into the structure of the text, and its classification of the parties addressed,—with the view to ascertain the character of the supposed limit and the rightful extent of its application. Let us endeavour to estimate the force of the entire testimony.

1. Consider the meaning which an assembly of Jews would necessarily attach to the words—"The promise



is unto you, and to your children.” On a point of vital moment, these words identify the Gospel with the Abrahamic covenant. They echo the great federal promise, “I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed.” How would Jews understand,—how must they have understood—such language? In all ages their children had been associated with themselves in covenant relation to God; and now when Christ’s apostles, “endowed with power from on high,” publish the salvation of the Gospel covenant, one of its first gracious utterances maintains the connection between parents and children. If this language were intended to exclude infants, it appears deceptive, and, in the circumstances, must have conveyed an erroneous impression. Whereas, if the apostle designed to include infants, he could not easily have selected terms more suitable for that purpose. When he said—“The promise is unto you and to your children,” the Jew could not understand it to the exclusion of infants, without the entire reversal of habits of thought and association, which had grown up with the covenanted people from the days of Abraham.

2. By “those afar off” the apostle points to the Gentiles. This is the interpretation of Theophylact, and of the great majority of commentators ancient and modern. Calvin defends it, Kuinöl compares it with rival views, and upholds its superiority, and Olshausen adopts it without hesitation. In Zech. vi. 15, and x. 9, the term רְחוֹקִים *remote* is supposed to apply to the Gentiles, and מְרֻחָקִים *remotenesses*, to the countries which they inhabit. The Jew regarded these nations as far from the land of Israel, and especially from the divine economy

which dispensed its blessings to the seed of Jacob. In the New Testament we find expressions of similar import. After Paul's conversion, the Lord said to him, Acts xxii. 21, "I will send thee *far hence* unto the Gentiles." In Eph. ii. 12, the natural state of Gentiles is described as one of alienation from the commonwealth of Israel; but as converts to the Gospel, they are thus addressed, *v.* 13, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The usage seems to be well established; and the association in Jewish minds between *distance* and *gentilism* requires no farther explanation. When therefore Peter said, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off," his words, in their obvious import, comprehended both Jews and Gentiles.

3. We cannot discover in the last clause *the specific limit* for which Dr. Carson contends. The "call of God" is confined by Olshausen (in loc.) to the Gentiles, chiefly on the ground that "the Jews were already in possession of God's covenant of grace." Calvin thus paraphrases the apostle's address to the Jews;—"As God by his own voice formerly collected you into one people, so the same voice shall sound every where, in order that those who are far off may draw near to you, when they are summoned by a new proclamation from God."—If with Olshausen, we limit the last clause to the call of the Gentiles, it is evidently bereft of all restrictive power in regard to the Jews, who were already "called of God." Very different, however, is the construction and exposition adopted by Dr. Carson. "The last clause," he says, "is a limitation of the

promise with respect to the three classes mentioned,<sup>1</sup> restricting it to such of each as the Lord shall call. This is as clear as language can make it; and nothing but perverseness can mistake it. . . . The three distinct classes are coupled by *and*—you *and* your children *and* all afar off. The last clause is not coupled with the rest by *and*, but added to the whole as a limitation.”—p. 204.

With all its cleverness and plausibility we consider this exposition a failure. In dealing with the text, one of the difficulties of the Baptist is to assign a sufficient reason for the mention of children at all, on the supposition that the promise was to be confined to adults. Now Dr. Carson has not assigned a sufficient reason, nor indeed any reason, for this singular procedure. Omit the term *children* altogether, and you have not lost one particle of the meaning, which, on the Baptist interpretation, the text was intended to convey. Had the apostle said nothing about *children*, it would have been more convenient for the system of our opponents; but they contrive to get over the inconvenience by depriving of all significance *what he has said* on that interesting subject. Their exposition recognises the classes denoted by *you*, and *all afar off*, but the class of *your children* it virtually blots out of the Gospel promise.

The author attaches to the *call of God* in this passage a sense for which he has produced no evidence, and which is yet essential to the correctness of his exposition. God no doubt *calls* the heirs of eternal life to their inheritance, and in this sense the term is employed in Rom. viii. 28, “All things work together for good

to them that love God to them who are the *called* (κλητοὶς) according to his purpose." See also *v.* 30. Again, God calls a people by the ministry of the word to a state of Gospel privilege. The tribes of Israel were thus called out of an ungodly world, and incorporated as a religious community in the enjoyment of access to exalted blessings. Under the new economy, the Gentiles are invited by the same outward call to unite in the fellowship of the one church under the pastorate of him who is "the light of the Gentiles," and "the glory of his people Israel." With striking beauty and impressiveness is this view presented in the *revealed mystery*, Eph. iii. 6, "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."—These two calls, broadly and essentially distinct from each other, we meet on the page of revelation.

Is it then the *general* or the particular and effectual call, which Acts ii. 39, exemplifies? Dr. Carson affords no aid toward the solution of the question. He assumes the call to be specific and saving, without assigning the reasons which may have determined his exegesis. On the other side of the question we find no want of either evidence or authority. Many leading names are opposed to the interpretation which extracts from this verse the doctrine of "effectual calling." Calvin regards it as containing the ordinary gospel call, Olshausen takes a similar view, and Dr. Robinson understands it figuratively of God *calling* or *inviting* "men to embrace the Gospel."

Mere names, however, are of little moment, and may



be endlessly bandied among controversialists. Far more important is it to look into the usage of *προσκαλέομαι*, especially in the New Testament. This term occurs with considerable frequency, and unless the passage before us form the exception, it is not once applied to the inward effectual call of God drawing the soul savingly to himself. The occurrence which most nearly approaches this sense we find in Acts xiii. 2, where the Spirit says, "Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto—*προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς*—I have *called* them." But even here the divine call relates to official designation and is not to be confounded with effectual calling. So foreign indeed is the latter sense to the Greek Scriptures, that in the best N. Testament lexicons it is never assigned to *προσκαλέομαι*; while it repeatedly belongs to the simple verb *καλέω*, and its derivative *κλησις*. The reference of the compound to ordinary *calls* requires no proof.

Again, a general Gospel call is the doctrine of the text. The prophecy to which Peter alludes comprehended "all flesh," and its fulfilment had commenced in the outpouring of the Spirit upon the apostles. The Gospel was immediately preached, a multitude of Jews heard its message, and became deeply concerned for their spiritual interests. Far from considering their case hopeless, Peter urged them to repent, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, with the assurance that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "*For*," said he, "the promise is unto you, and to your children." Whatever the promise may mean, it is evident that *all* composing the assembly were plied with

it as a powerful motive to repentance and faith. Peter did not say, "Repent, for the promise is to *some* of you." This would have cooled down to zero his fervid appeal, besides presenting an *unparalleled* sample of apostolic preaching. But he said broadly and generally, "The promise is unto *you*, and to your children." Nor is this generality, as we have shown, restricted by the *call of God*, which denotes simply the Gospel invitation to Jew and Gentile, who are thereby called of God to believe to the saving of their souls. We recognise the same leading thought in Eph. ii. 16, 17, where Paul speaks of Christ as reconciling both (Jews and Gentiles) "unto God in one body by the cross," and preaching "peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

4. The promise, ἐπαγγελία, is quite consistent with the *general* character of the *call* of God. Does this promise refer solely to "the gift of the Holy Ghost?" If so, it is asked, whether in point of fact the children of believers, as such, have an interest in this gift? We might reply, by demanding what Paul meant, when he said to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*." What! The salvation of a household suspended on the faith of a parent!! But waiving this, we maintain that Joel's prophecy, and Peter's preaching point to the *miraculous influences* of the Spirit, which in point of fact are no more realized by the *believer*, than by his *children*. These gifts were enjoyed in the apostolic age; but we have every evidence that God did not design their perpetuation in the Christian church. When therefore the

Baptist gravely assures us that the Holy Ghost is not now conferred on the children of believers, we instantly reply, neither is he conferred on believers themselves in the sense recognised by Peter in commenting on the prediction of Joel. If our opponents can cut off *the children*, we are able by the same logic to cut off their *believing parents* from a beneficial interest in "*the gift*." Let it be remembered also that when the apostle says, "The promise is unto you," he does not assert either a *present* or *future* fulfilment of it; but merely holds up the promised good as attainable by the instrumentality of "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

With Calvin, Beza, Piscater and others, we are disposed to understand *the promise* in a wider acceptation, embracing the forgiveness, holiness,—salvation offered in the Gospel. The prophecy of Joel coupled salvation with devout *calling* upon the Lord, the preaching of Peter, v. 38, referred to "forgiveness of sins," and the promise itself must have carried Jewish minds to the leading provision of the Abrahamic covenant. On such grounds, we advocate the more enlarged view of the promise, identifying it with Paul's "promise by faith of Jesus Christ;" while we maintain that under any application, it secures to the children of God's people an inalienable right to the chartered and covenanted privileges of Christianity.

But though the way may be so far cleared for the admission of infants, the Baptist still urges that on this occasion, the ordinance was obviously confined to adults. "They that gladly received his word were baptized."

This description, it is alleged, is wholly inapplicable to infants; and hence none of them were included among the three thousand to whom baptism was administered. The validity of this objection we shall presently bring to the test, in connection with the argument founded on the baptism of households.

Let us first notice, as bearing on the federal position of children, the testimony found in 1 Cor. vii. 14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." Billroth complains that in the interpretation of this verse, commentators "have dragged into their explanations a subject of which there are no traces in the text, viz., baptism, and so have impeded themselves with unnecessary difficulties." It is not easy, however, to perceive how the evil, if such it is, could have been avoided. The passage makes a wide distinction between the children of heathen parents, and the children of parents, one of whom was a believer in Christ. In the latter case the children are declared to be *ἅγια* *holy*; clearly implying that in the former they must be regarded as *ἀκαθάρτα* *unclean*; and as the distinction has some reference to the Christian church, its direct bearing on infant baptism, or at least infant connection with the new covenant, could not fail to suggest itself to the student of Scripture. Neander looks upon this verse as supplying "the idea whence infant baptism unfolds itself;" and with regard to the parental relation, he says,—“This word (*ἅγια*) indicates a holy influence of communication between parents and children, through



which the children of Christian parents are distinguished from those of others, so that the former may, in a certain sense, be styled *ἅγια* in opposition to the *ἀνάθετα*.”—Billroth on Cor. i. p. 186.

Dr. Carson, on the other hand, contends that “the sanctification referred to, must be *legitimacy according to the law of God*,” and to the objection “that even the marriages of unbelievers are lawful, and the offspring legitimate,” he replies,—“Certainly, because they are according to the law both of God and man. But as Christ commands his people to marry in the Lord, to marry otherwise is contrary to God’s law. Neither such marriage then, nor the offspring of it, would be legitimate according to the law of God except by this provision. . . . This provision then is most bountiful and kind. The believer by remaining in his marriage with the unbeliever does not continue in sin, as he would by continuing in fornication. His marriage is sanctified to him. . . . In no view of it can it countenance the baptism of infants or unbelievers. . . . If such infants were even as holy as the infant John the baptist, it would not imply their baptism,” &c.—p. 208. To these views we are decidedly opposed, as will appear from the following remarks.—

1. The verb *ἁγιάζω* and the adjective *ἅγιος* never refer to legitimacy according to any law of either God or man. These are not terms in regard to the meaning of which there exists room for dubiety. In the Septuagint and Apocrypha, *ἅγιος* occurs above five hundred times, and about two hundred and forty times in the Greek Testament. In this state of things, there can be

no scarcity of evidence. If *ἄγιος* denotes legitimacy, the interpreter can have no difficulty in placing that sense beyond the reach of cavil. Baptists have often asserted this to be its meaning; we would respectfully urge them to produce the grounds of their assertion. We offer them more than seven hundred occurrences of the term in those departments of Greek, which bear most intimately on the passage before us; and we defy them to fix on a solitary instance in which it necessarily, or by fair exposition, denotes *legitimate*. Why do they adopt a meaning without proof? Why does Dr. Carson, in the teeth of his own canon, attach the sense of legitimacy to a term which has no such sense in the language? Or, if examples are to be found, why withhold them, when he must have known that every inch of the ground on which he trod was contested? We deny distinctly and advisedly that *ἄγιος* ever signifies *legitimate*, and that *ἀκάθαρτος*, the term contrasted with it, ever denotes illegitimate. The field is wide, the occurrences are vastly numerous;—let Baptists prove their meaning, if they can.

2. Dr. Carson's view is not relieved by his referring the legitimacy to the law of God. His first business was to prove generally, in relation to any law human or divine, the sense which he has patronized. Failing this, he should have endeavoured to show that *ἄγιος* means legitimate in the particular view which he founded on this text. But he has accomplished neither; he has attempted neither. The sense *legitimate* is not in evidence; and therefore its application here is perfectly arbitrary. Moreover, are we to be told that when the

legality of marriage is tested by the law of God, the common Greek terms for legitimate and illegitimate must be set aside, and others substituted? Whatever law may form the standard of judgment, we contend that *holy* and *unclean* cannot be considered interchangeable with legitimate and illegitimate.

3. The author's admission respecting heathen marriages militates against his interpretation. When both parties were heathens, the marriage, as he justly acknowledges, was lawful, and the offspring legitimate "according to the law both of God and man." But, were the children of such marriages *ἁγία* *holy*? If holy and legitimate may be interchanged, they must have been holy; yet such a use of the term would sound strange to those who are acquainted with its numerous applications to the people of God as distinguished from the world in general, and the heathen world in particular. Heathen children were *legitimate* according to God's law, but not *holy*.

4. The injunction to Christians to marry in the Lord could not affect these Corinthian marriages, which were contracted before the introduction of Christianity. To annul these marriages, or render the offspring of them illegitimate, would have been a piece of *ex post facto* legislation. The marriages were valid, when contracted, and therefore it needed not Dr. Carson's "kind and bountiful provision" to render *them* lawful, and legitimize the children. The facts of the case, therefore, combine with the use of language in overthrowing his false definition of holiness.

5. The passages in Ezra x. 3, 44, and Neh. xiii. 23,

24, referred to by Dr. Carson, are not to his purpose. On the return of the captivity, those who married "strange wives," had by that act broken the law of God. The marriages were illegal, because contracted in violation of an express statutory enactment. Not so, however, these marriages among the Corinthians: for the law which condemned them had no existence as a law, when they were solemnized. The believing husband or wife, therefore,—the convert to Christianity after marriage—had not the shadow of a right to put away, or separate from, the unbelieving party. There was law for such a course among the returned captives, but no law among the converted Corinthians.

6. The holiness predicated of the children is plainly federal holiness. This application of the term cannot be disputed, as it is abundantly exemplified both in the Old and New Testament. Israel as a people in covenant with God, was holy unto the Lord. In this federal holiness, the infant offspring of God's ancient heritage participated. They were so within the bond of the covenant, as to be entitled to its privileges and blessings, which flowed in the channel of religious ordinances. The words *ἀκάθαρτος* and *ἅγιος*, observes Locke, "are used here by the apostle in the Jewish sense. The Jews called all that were Jews *holy*; and all others they called *unclean*. . . . This way of speaking St. Paul transfers from the Jewish into the Christian church, calling all that are of the Christian church *saints* or *holy*, by which reason all that were out of it were *unclean*." This view is not only the correct one, but it has in reality no competitor. What then is the



position of the children whom the apostle pronounces ἁγία holy? Possessed of federal holiness, their claim to the initiatory rite of the new covenant, we hold to be ascertained and established. Is it objected that baptism does not here form the subject of discussion? The objection though often heard in high critical quarters is wholly irrelevant; because the apostle, whatever may be his subject, is not precluded from laying down principles which shall direct and control the administration of baptism. He has manifestly done so in the present instance; for, as it appears to us, the language which Scripture uniformly holds respecting divine covenants and economies, and federal relationship to church privileges, must be blotted out of God's book, before we can venture upon the step of pronouncing these *holy* children, and generally the children of church members, inadmissible to the ordinance of Christian baptism.

Some have asserted that a similar qualification is ascribed by the apostle to the unbelieving husband, and the unbelieving wife. Each is said to be sanctified (ἁγιάσται) by a believing partner. Let those who advance the objection, consult the old interpreters, or study the original in the light of such commentators as Billroth and Olshausen, and they will find their mistake.

BAPTISM OF HOUSEHOLDS.—This forms the last branch of Scripture evidence which we consider it necessary to canvass. Acts xvi. 15, "She was baptized, and *her household*." vv. 31, 33, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*."—"He was baptized, he and *all his* straightway." 1 Cor. i. 16, "I baptized also *the household* of Stephanas." Many a

strong hand has been put forth to break the connection between household baptism, and infant baptism; but that connection still remains in its strength, to bid defiance to fresh efforts, and guard the privileges of the helpless through coming generations. Let us briefly estimate the force of this important branch of the argument.

1. We do not build mainly on the fact of the households mentioned, but on the *common practice*, which is thereby clearly indicated. No one will assert that the New Testament contains a record of all the baptisms administered in the apostolic age. Its writers did not profess to make out a census of them. In instances unnumbered, individuals and families doubtless submitted to the ordinance, though no entry on the sacred page attests their dedication to a Saviour whom they loved. That this is true of households, the manner of the Scripture narrative evinces to the satisfaction of every candid mind. When the Philippian jailer and *all his* were baptized, the writer does not present it as an uncommon occurrence. When the ordinance was administered to Lydia and *her household*, we find no note of admiration. Nor is the baptism of *the household* of Stephanas referred to as a world's wonder. Baptists have attempted and failed to prove that in these families there were no infants. But had they even succeeded to their heart's wish, the broad and solid foundation of the argument would still have remained unshaken. They cannot, they will not, deny that the instances narrated form no more than a specimen of the households baptized before the close of apostolic labour. To

imagine then that in a very considerable number of families there were no infants is to trample upon the strongest probabilities, and to set experience and history at defiance. Dr. Carson admits "that there might have been infants" in the house of the jailer; and none, we presume, will affirm that there were no infants in any of the households baptized by the apostles and their fellow labourers. Whether such infants were admitted to baptism, or not, is matter for farther inquiry; but that they formed part of some of the baptized families is the dictate of experience and the necessary admission of candour.

2. The exclusion of infants from *household* baptisms is opposed to the current practice and language of the ancient economy. Dr. Carson can produce instances of the use of the term household, in which we must understand some members to be excepted. But he has not touched the analogy on which our present observation is founded. Through the entire history of the Old Testament church, *the accession of a HOUSEHOLD to the Lord's people necessarily included THE INFANTS of that household*. Infants were not excepted, when the initiatory rite of Judaism was administered to a household. Infants in common with their fathers were circumcised, and by the same observance incorporated with the great congregation. Thus was established a current and well defined application of the term household. Let a household be spoken of as connecting themselves with the church of God, and all who understood the language, would instantly learn that the step thus taken applied to the infant of eight days as imperatively as to him

who had attained manhood's prime. Now the *baptism* of a household is an analogous case. It embraces the formation of the first link of connection with God's heritage, by means of the initiatory rite of Christianity, and the analogy pleads strongly against the exclusion of infants. Nay it is plain from the sense of the term, combined with prior usage, that they must be included, unless the author of our religion has interfered by way of prohibition. The baptism of households necessarily involves the baptism of infants, and secures their admission to the Christian church ; and their claim cannot be righteously barred, except by the direct authority of the King of Zion.

3. We maintain that Christ's authority, put forth in the commission, does not exclude infants from the baptized households. According to Dr. Carson, the commission exercises a limiting and controlling power over the households. The commission he regards as a "sure commentary on the households of Lydia, Stephanas, and the jailer." From this appeal to the modifying force of the commission, we may infer that the households, if permitted the exercise of their own native freedom, would inevitably declare in favour of the claim of infants to Christian baptism. Leave the term households in possession of the application with which usage had invested it, and in vain will you attempt to exclude infants from its accredited extension. Dr. Carson, as an enlightened exegete, felt this ; and hence a continual reference to the commission for help against the households, pervades this part of his discussion. Indeed the only strong point which he has made, in combating the



argument derived from household baptism, rests on the alleged fact that the commission requires the baptized households to clear themselves of infants. The commission, in his view, makes the exception, the commission authoritatively excludes infants, the commission cannot tolerate a little one as part of a baptized household. To this whole procedure we object as opposed to sound interpretation. The *practice* is uniformly regarded as a commentary on the *law*. Dr. Carson, reversing this order, makes the law a commentary on the practice. He finds the baptism of households by the apostles, and these households, he admits, may have contained infants; but the infants, he alleges, could not have been baptized, because the commission restricts the ordinance to believers. What is this, but to destroy the record of apostolic baptisms, as an independent testimony? Why summon this witness at all, if he must be compelled to sustain *Dr. Carson's view* of the commission?—For it manifestly comes to this. The author asserts that the commission restricted the baptism of households to believers,—by which we are simply to understand, that *he so interprets* the commission as to exclude infants from all interest in its provisions.

Taking higher ground, however, we maintain that Dr. Carson's restriction is not in the commission. We have carefully examined that document, in the light of facts and testimonies on several of which he has not touched, and our deliberate finding is that "there is room for infants in the commission." If our judgment is sustained by the evidence, we have taken off the *high pressure* by which Dr. Carson sought to force the *escape*

of infants from the baptized households. Our view of the commission secures for the *households* perfect liberty to bear their plain testimony without fear or favour; and in that spontaneous and unprejudiced testimony we discover triumphant support to the cause of infant baptism.

4. Household baptism, compared with apostolic baptisms in general, sustains the claims of infants. The Baptist cannot prove that there were no infants among the three thousand baptized in one day at Jerusalem. The Pædobaptist will admit that they were probably all adults, chiefly because the audience appears to have been composed entirely of adults, most of whom moreover were not citizens. Preceded by the preaching and the professed acceptance of the Gospel, baptism is administered to adults in attendance on the public ministry of the apostles. The same Gospel enters the bosoms of families, and as the cheering result, whole households, comprehending infants and adults, are baptized. No exception is stated in regard to infants, and Dr. Carson has failed to force an exception by the power of the commission. The adults composing the public audience were baptized; the infants and adults of the household were baptized. Is not this state of the case in perfect keeping with the doctrine of infant baptism? The people who assemble on public occasions are adults, and on a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, they are baptized; and when the Gospel enters the domestic scene, instantly we are supplied with proof that Christianity does not yield to Patriarchism or Judaism in tender regard for the little ones. *Households* are bap-

tized. The Gospel church, like its divine founder,—the mediator of the new covenant on which it is established,—affectionately receives infants into its arms and blesses them. It has room for the *infant* Isaiahs, and Jeremiahhs, and John the baptists, and Timothys, whom the Baptist excludes from the congregation of the Lord, leaving them for years in the same ecclesiastical position with the masses of the heathen world.

We here bring to a close our examination of Scripture evidence. Our attention has been chiefly concentrated on the great leading points, on which all parties are disposed to suspend the important issue. Though solicitous that our investigations should partake largely of the *didactic*, we have by no means eschewed the controversial element. We have opposed the latitudinarian view of the ordinance; we have fearlessly met the Baptist on the field of the Abrahamic covenant,—of the Mosaic institute,—of the new covenant,—of the apostolic commission,—and of apostolic baptisms in execution of the commission;—avowing and defending our honest conviction, that the testimony of the word of God sustains the cause of infant baptism.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

### PATRISTIC INFANT BAPTISMS.

AFTER THE *THIRD* CENTURY, NO EVIDENCE FOR ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM DURING A PERIOD OF 700 YEARS.—TESTIMONY OF PELAGIUS AND OF AUGUSTINE IN THE *FOURTH* CENTURY.—EVEN IN THE *FIRST THREE* CENTURIES—NO INSTANCE OF *THE* ADULT BAPTISM WHICH ALONE CAN SUSTAIN OUR OPPOSANTS—NO OPPOSITION TO INFANT BAPTISM ON ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST PRINCIPLES—AND NO AID IN TRACING THAT OBSERVANCE TO A *HUMAN* ORIGINAL.—SUMMARY OF PATRISTIC EVIDENCE FOR INFANT BAPTISM—PERSIAN CHURCH—CYPRIAN AND THE CHURCH IN NORTH AFRICA—ORIGEN AND THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA—TERTULLIAN—IRENÆUS—JUSTIN MARTYR.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE EVIDENCE.—CONCLUSION.

BAPTISTS are aware that after the *third* century of the Christian era, their system is utterly disowned by the ancient church. For more than seven hundred years from that date, no voice sustains the cause of exclusive adult baptism. During this period we witness among the Christians, divisions and strifes and heresies,—yet amid painful diversity of creed, and infirmity of temper through many parts of a widening Christendom, all “were of one heart and of one soul” in upholding infant baptism. As this ground is all our own, we content ourselves with one or two testimonies out of multitudes.



In the *fourth* century, the great controversy raged between Pelagius and Augustine; while both were the fast friends of infant baptism. Nay more. Pelagius, who had travelled over most of the Christian world, declared—*nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse—that he had never heard of even any impious heretic*, who refused the ordinance to infants. A similar testimony was borne by the distinguished bishop of Hippo, whose labours historical and controversial must have brought him largely into contact with correct sources of information.

But as our opponents place their chief reliance on the first three centuries, we hasten to confront them on that ground, satisfied that while *they* dare not appeal to the later ecclesiastical testimonies, *we* have nothing to fear from any available source of evidence, earlier or more recent, patristic or biblical. On the hills of Scripture verity, or in the valleys of the fathers, the good old cause of Pædobaptism, by the divine blessing, can meet the onslaught of its most potent adversaries.—We take leave to state definitively that in our brief notice of this department of Christian antiquity, we owe no submission, and shall pay none, to patristic *authority*. The baptism referred to or administered during the early ages, we regard as a valuable auxiliary in ascertaining the character of apostolic baptism;—beyond this point it has no valid claim on our acceptance. It is not our interest to underrate the views of the fathers; for we are deeply convinced that they yield considerable support to infant baptism; while the utmost research and ingenuity have hitherto failed to extract from them a

particle of evidence on behalf of Antipædobaptism. How stands the case in relation to the period embraced in our present inquiry?

1. The Baptist looks in vain to the first three centuries for an instance of *the adult baptism*, which alone can sustain his *system*. We have already stated that the baptism of Jewish and heathen converts to the faith is a service common to us and to our opponents. Millions of such adult baptisms, therefore, could not affect the question under discussion.—In the case of a child born to Christian parents, was the ordinance deferred till the child arrived at years of maturity? Did the practice of the ancient church in this case sustain adult baptism? We take the negative, and we challenge Baptists to the proof. If no such instances biblical or patristic existed, their system cannot stand: if there were such instances, strange that not one of them is preserved in the record of three hundred years, aye, we might assert, in the record of a thousand years! No instance is found in the Scriptures; none in the writings of the Christian fathers.

2. These centuries furnish no instance of any church, or sect, or author opposing infant baptism on Antipædobaptist principles. During a considerable portion of the specified period, the fact of the baptism of infants is established by direct and formal attestation. Where were the Baptists when the simplicity of the primitive ordinance became complicated, and overborne by this sad corruption? According to their theory, believer baptism alone was the order of the day, in the age which immediately succeeded the apostolic. What

followed? Infant baptism? At all events its introduction must have had some date; and the *later* that date, *its struggle* with adult baptism must have been *the more severe*, and a *record* of the struggle, *the more certain*. Is this so? Let Baptists reply. They will probably fix on Tertullian, as a forlorn hope; but Tertullian held views of his own, and no scholar who has studied *the passage*, will compromise his reputation by asserting that the gloomy Montanist opposed infant baptism on Antipædobaptist principles. His testimony we shall presently cite:—meanwhile we solicit the attention of Baptists to our proposition, challenging them to overthrow it, if in their power.

3. Our opponents cannot detect among the fathers of these centuries the *origin* of infant baptism. They denounce it as an abuse,—a subversion of the law of Christ,—a substitution of human device for the ordinance of God. Strange that of the origin of an abuse so radical, so prevalent, and so permanent no record should be found. We can understand the origin of infant baptism in the days of the apostles, and its administration we think we can trace especially in household baptism. Baptists, however, affirm it to be a patristic innovation, though without the shadow of proof. They give us conjectures and assertions in abundance,—still *their* origin of infant baptism remains shrouded in impenetrable darkness. The Rev. Charles Stovel, in his *Christian Discipleship*, p. 402, has a chapter on “*the rise of infant baptism*,” tracing the observance to Cyprian! and sagely giving us to understand that Cyprian baptized “*sickly children only!!*” Has the man ever

looked into Cyprian? Charity will answer, no. The writings of that father show us *the operation*, but *not the origin*, of infant baptism; and children *sickly* and *healthy* he admits alike to the ordinance. Travellers have failed to reach the source of the Nile, by mistaking some *tributary* for the noble river. This is Mr. Stovel's error. Cyprian's testimony is a tribute to the practice of infant baptism in his day; but he does not pretend to "stand by the well of water." With those who deny its apostolicity, the origin of infant baptism is still a *terra incognita*.

We may now glance at the evidence which these centuries yield to our cause;—and should the reader consider it less copious than he may have anticipated, let him duly weigh the fact that as we ascend to apostolic times, the testimony of the fathers on all subjects is found to be increasingly meagre and indefinite.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE.—“In the Persian church,” says Neander, “infant baptism was, in the course of the third century, so generally recognised that the sect founder Mani thought he could draw an argument from it in favour of” one of his doctrines.—Gen. Ch. Hist. i. 428. In the church of North Africa, bishop Fidus, influenced by the analogy of circumcision, thought baptism should not be administered *before the eighth day*. Cyprian was consulted, and in A.D. 252, in the name of a Council of 66 bishops, he replied to Fidus, stating that they were unanimously of opinion that infants may be baptized *before the eighth day*, or so soon as they are born.—“In hoc enim quod tu putabas faciendum, nemo consensit, sed universi potius judicavimus, *nulli hominum nato* misericordiam dei et gratiam denegandam.”—Lib. iii. Ep. 8. Origen (b. 185. d. 254.) repeatedly attests the practice and necessity of infant baptism, which he regards as an observance that had come down from the apostles. “Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum.”—*Hom. in Luc.* 14. “Secundum ecclesiæ observantiam etiam parvulis baptismum dari.”—*Hom.* 8.



in *Lev.* "Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare."—*Com.* in Ep. ad Rom. v. c. 9. The practice referred to by Origen may be presumed to apply specially though not exclusively to the church of Alexandria.

Tertullian (b. 160. d. 220?) looked upon infant baptism with an unfriendly eye. He contends for the delay of baptism in different cases, including infants, unmarried persons, and widows. "Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum. . . . Norint petere salutem, ut petenti dedisse videaris. Non *minore de causa* innupti quoque procrastinandi," &c. *De Bapt.* c. 18. Irenæus, who was born in the early part of the *second* century, speaks of infants, and persons of all ages as *born again* or regenerated to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—"Omnes enim per semetipsum venit salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum *renascuntur* in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes," &c.—*Libri Adv. Hær.* ii. c. 22. § 4. Justin Martyr was born about the year 114, "and flourished as a writer about 140—160." To his testimony reference was had in expounding the commission. He speaks of numbers of both sexes, sixty and seventy years of age, who had been discipled (*ἐμαθητεύθησαν*) to Christ from childhood (*ἐκ παιδων*), and who were still alive in his own day. Whatever is meant by the *discipling*, we have shown that in the case of these persons, *that process must have taken place within the apostolic age.*

On the testimony thus summarily adduced, we offer a few brief comments.

1. The *extent* to which infant baptism is known to have prevailed in the third century is to us unaccountable on Baptist principles. It had found firm footing in the Persian church;—it was practised by the church of Alexandria;—in the church of North Africa the solitary doubt respected the expediency of deferring it till the eighth day;—and in fact we may challenge our opponents to produce a corner of the Christian world in which infant baptism was not established. Will they soberly try, on their own principles, to account for this

state of things? If adult baptism, in their sense of the term, was alone apostolic, how came infant baptism in so short a time to be the practice *not of one church*, but of *all the churches*? The *extent* of the observance increases the difficulty almost incalculably : for had infant baptism, as a human institution, originated in any one of the churches, that very circumstance would have gone far to secure its rejection by the others. Had Carthage, for instance, been its parent, Rome or Alexandria would in all probability, have proved a hard stepmother; and not only so, but the authority of God's word would have been brought to bear upon the daring innovation. Professor Andrews Norton derives a weighty argument for the genuineness of the books of the New Testament from the extensive recognition of them at an early period by Christians in all parts of the world: perhaps it would be practicable for average ingenuity to construct a similar argument out of the materials supplied by history, for the apostolic origin of infant baptism.

2. The prevalence of infant baptism in his own day is more than sustained by the opposition of Tertullian. As this stern father disapproved of the practice, it was his interest to reason it down by solid arguments. What then has he alleged against it? Does he pronounce or prove it a *novelty*—unscriptural—unapostolic? This would have settled the point; and it is difficult to perceive how any thing but truth and conviction could have prevented a bold able man from using against infant baptism so deadly a weapon. But no: he contents himself with the low ground of expediency, and with a gross misinterpretation of our Saviour's words,—

“Suffer little children (infants) to come unto me.” By such opposition infant baptism is honoured and strengthened. Neander inconsiderately views Tertullian’s conduct as evidence that “the practice had not yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution.” Now, in the same passage, this father condemns with equal reason (*non minore de causa*) the baptism of unmarried persons, and of widows! Are we therefore to conclude that the baptism of the unmarried and of widows had not yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution? The truth is that in all the cases, Tertullian contemplates the ordinance not in the light of apostolic authority, but of a supposed practical utility which he tries to measure by the circumstances of each class. Tertullian is at once the *enemy* and the *supporter* of infant baptism.

3. In order to form a correct estimate of Origen’s testimony, it should be viewed in combination with that of Irenæus and Justin. Little more than a century after the apostolic age, Origen attests the practice and affirms the apostolicity of infant baptism. Would a man of his standing and attainments, not to say character, have hazarded this affirmation, if the observance had been but recently introduced?—Irenæus represents it as one of the objects of Christ’s mission to regenerate and sanctify infants. But, says Hagenbach, to refer this regeneration (*renasci*) to baptism is “a most arbitrary *petitio principii*.”—*Hist. of Doctrines*. i. 194. Does the author understand the meaning of a *petitio principii*? Those who refer this testimony to baptism, instead of *begging the question*, adduce in support of their

view certain evidence, the insufficiency of which the author has not evinced. Commenting on the same term, Neander says, "It is difficult to conceive how the term regeneration can be employed, in reference to this age, to denote any thing else than baptism."—i. 425. We agree with him in substance, though we greatly prefer the more exact expression, that *baptism is necessarily implied in patristic regeneration* (ἀναγέννησις, ἀνακαινισμός). Now the language of Irenæus, in this view which we are prepared to defend, brings up infant baptism to the age of *apostolic men*; for he was a hearer of Polycarp, John's disciple, and his learning and honest zeal for the truth cannot be challenged.—Next comes the testimony of Justin, which plants the discipleship of *children* within the age of the apostles, and sustains at least their meetness for baptism on the principle of the commission itself. They are spoken of simply as *children*, Justin's object not being minute specification; while Irenæus introduces *infants* by name among the classes entitled to the ordinance of baptism.

Had Neander, as a philosophical historian, combined these testimonies, he could not have dismissed as either improbable or unimportant, Origen's assertion of the apostolicity of infant baptism.\* He very properly attaches no weight to the attempts at neutralizing the evidence of this father, by vague charges of unfaithfulness against his translators Jerome and Rufinus. But he should not have treated the *traditio apostolica* as if it

\* Compare the *ab apostolis traditio* of Origen with the διηγήσεις ἀποστολικῆς of Papias, noticed by *Stuart on the Apocalypse*, i. 303, 304.



stood alone, or unsupported by preceding evidence. No man who has studied the philosophy of history, will hesitate to admit that the assertion of Origen derives a large accession of credibility from the testimony of Irenæus and Justin Martyr.

With regard to those who would place infant communion on the same footing with infant baptism, we simply demand proof that the former observance was as *early*, and as *widely diffused*, and as *permanent*. It is well known that in relation to the church universal, infant communion was like the gourd which “came up in a night and withered in a night;” while the opponents of infant baptism may find for it a more appropriate emblem in “the bush burning, but not consumed.”

CONCLUSION.—It forms no objection against infant baptism, that in patristic times it was often attended with abuses and perversions. What doctrine, what observance, of Christianity escaped the same unholy contact? The crystal stream must partake of the impurities of the channel through which its waters flow. Even immersion, with all its exclusive pretensions to Scripture patronage, was altered, dispensed with, overloaded, corrupted. The Baptist does not condemn his favourite mode, nor do we condemn infant baptism, on account of such corruptions.—It is not for us or our opponents to endorse indiscriminately the observances of Christian antiquity. The Romanist or the Puseyite may swallow the fathers wholesale, and digest as best he can, their palpable errors and contradictions. But the friends of evangelical truth will firmly persist in measuring the fathers by the standard of God’s word,—

in holding up “the law and the testimony” as the divine rule for all times and for all men,—and rejecting without compunction, whatever is most venerable on earth, when it is found to contravene the authority of heaven. On this high ground we defend infant baptism as an ordinance of God, instituted for the wisest and most gracious purposes, and to be perpetuated in the church visible through all ages ; while we deliberately plead the warrant of Scripture for the freedom which we enjoy in the mode of its administration.

THE END.















